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SONG-SPRAY.



*Josephus Shaw.*

FROM A BOOK FUND COMMEMORATING  
RUTH GERALDINE ASHEN  
CLASS OF 1931

It's a sad thing  
when a man is to be so soon forgotten  
And the shining in his soul  
gone from the earth  
With no thing remaining;

And it's a sad thing  
when a man shall die  
And forget love  
which is the shiningness of life;

But it's a sadder thing  
that a man shall forget love  
And he not dead but walking in the field  
of a May morning  
And listening to the voice of the thrush.

—R.G.A., in *A Yearbook of  
Stanford Writing*, 1931

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SONG-SPRAY.



BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

## SONG-BLOOM.

*Crown 8vo. Price 7s. 6d.*

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### OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"There are few of our living poets who possess a greater mastery than Mr. Barlow of form and metre. It is easy to believe that with him, as it was with Churchill, verse is a more natural form of expression than prose."—*Scotsman*.

"The beauties of the pagan faith, such as it was, are well sung by Mr. Barlow, and he has perhaps clothed the gods of ancient Greece and Rome in as decent and graceful covering as he could find. But we almost fancy in his heart he re-echoes the cry '*Vicisti, Galilæ!*' and that many persons who read his beautiful poetry will feel the same."—*Public Opinion*.

"Of the *technique* of the poet, it is superfluous to say anything at this late hour, his claims to distinction among the younger generation of poets having received cordial and unhesitating admission. . . . The most notable feature of all Mr. Barlow's work is his reverent sympathy with humanity, and his undimmed belief in the elevating and redeeming power of the beauty manifested in Creation. He possesses



iv *OPINIONS OF THE PRESS UPON "SONG-BLOOM".*

in truth the Greek power of seeing into the soul of beauty, and depicting with swift and unerring force its relation to humanity and life. In this age of money-getting, there has arisen a passionate yearning for, and keen appreciation of, these infinite beauties of earth, and sea, and sky; and to those—and they are many—who are filled with this sympathy, Mr. Barlow's books must be ever welcome revelations. It is curious to note the virulency of attack which has in certain quarters greeted Mr. Barlow's work. His exquisite love-songs, full of the tenderest and most reverential spirit, have been, by a process of innuendo, represented as sensual and debased. Certain male-prudes seem to hold, as a sort of religion, the belief that the human love-passion is an unholy and degrading part of our nature, to be suppressed with sedulous care. To these people it must indeed be odious to hear the bold and manly assertion that woman is, by right of her sex, the queen and creatress of creation. . . . . In the volume before us, more markedly than in any of its predecessors, there is formulated, what seems at first sight a revolt against all established faith. If, however, we take into consideration the pure reverence which breathes through the many 'Hymns' Mr. Barlow has written, and of which 'Song-Bloom' contains fine examples, we cannot accept the theory that Mr. Barlow is essentially irreligious. We incline, rather, to the belief that he possesses the power of standing almost entirely outside himself, and that therefore this apparent revolt is quite impersonal, the elements for it existing about him—he simply, synthetically building them up into symmetric and visible form. In this phase of his work (audacious as it undoubtedly is) Mr. Barlow's charm of style never deserts him, and even the most orthodox of critics may forgive its Paganism, for the sake of its poetic force and beauty."—*Colburn's New Monthly*.

"The notices of the Press that form the van and bring up the rear of Mr. Barlow's marshalled lyrics will not be contradicted by the new songs. They bear out the promise of the old. Still does Mr. Barlow exhibit a command of most harmonious versification. . . . .

Mr. Barlow carries us with him to the depth of sadness, and earnestly striving after the truths of life. The bard of Venus sometimes expres

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS UPON "SONG-BLOOM". ▼

in most solemn strains the longing for rest, the yearning for a Power,  
to whom he prays,

‘Meet me and show  
What path to go—  
Till the last work of deathless love be done.’

The bitter anticipation of the fated parting from the other half of life never was more truly interpreted than in the lines ‘Hold Thou my Hand’. So, too, if Venus Victrix often commands the bard to sing, Venus Libitina inspires many threnodies. Many of the song-blooms are wrought into funereal wreaths and cast into graves. There is a haunting sadness in the simplicity of the lines ‘On the Death of a Child’. They are the true utterances of the heart, that scans all the beauties and joys of life, but finds ‘not the little footstep, not the little face’.—*Life*.

“The writer of the volume before us belongs to the race of true poets. No one who has read Mr. Barlow’s works, and who has that in himself which enables him to recognize true poetry, can doubt this. There is much in his last volume, ‘Song-Bloom,’ which partakes of the heavenly inspiration, and which cannot die. . . . There are four poems in the volume, which form a group by themselves of a very remarkable character. We do not recollect anything precisely analogous in the whole range of poetic literature to these, which we must call the ‘Christ and Venus’ poems. The titles are, ‘English Flowers and Seas,’ ‘Voices,’ ‘Christ and Venus,’ and ‘Christ and Beauty.’ We have read them carefully and consecutively. In all the four poems the attractive power of ‘Christ’ is contrasted with that of ‘Venus.’ It is, of course, only fair to ask what the poet means by ‘Christ’ and ‘Venus’? We will assume that his ‘Christ’ is what he would call the distorted ideal of evangelical theology, and this is the best and most charitable construction we can conceive in explanation of the comparisons drawn. But even then the name of Christ, and his life of self-sacrificing love given for humanity, have appealed irresistibly to millions of hearts, and continue to do so down to the present time. . . . We have grouped three poems under the title of ‘spiritual love’—‘Love-Song,’ most exquisitely pretty, (the parallelism of the

vi *OPINIONS OF THE PRESS UPON "SONG-BLOOM".*

verses in the first and second part and the skill of the rhythmical composition are liable to be overlooked), 'An Adjuration,' and 'Hold Thou my Hand.' The two last are beautifully pure, touching, and tender.

The gems of the volume are however, to our mind, comprised in these four—'A Hymn' (p. 43), 'Far Behind,' 'A Hymn' (p. 37), and last and best, 'The Immortal and the Mortal'. In the first five verses of this magnificent poem Mr. Barlow more than supplies the answer to his own sensuous Muse in the 'Christ and Venus' poems. . . .

We do not feel that we have by any means exhausted the beauties of the volume. The power of Mr. Barlow's genius, and the capacity he possesses for presenting high truths in beautiful language, grow upon us, even without reference to his former works. A selection from the whole series would make a splendid volume.

It is one of the articles of our faith that 'goodness only is immortal', and therefore we look forward to the future, when the good work that Mr. Barlow has done, and will, no doubt, yet do, will have outlived the inferior and imperfect, and when his name will be associated with many undying contributions to the poetry of our country."—*The Burlington*.

"A book of real poetry. Various but ever charming rhythm, felicity of expression, and fertility of ideas, are everywhere marked. Mr. Barlow, moreover, is a careful observer, and a thinker, qualities giving an earnestness and meaning which render his work not merely pleasing but useful."—*Modern Thought*.

"Mr. Barlow has a thorough mastery of poetic forms. His great theme is now, as it has ever been, love, and love of a passionate species. But it is difficult always to live at Mr. Barlow's terribly high pressure, and we feel that his is song to which we can listen but now and again. Unpretending as the poem is, his 'Lines on the Death of a Child' are among the most charming in the volume. They come as a lull between two storms. 'Another Autumn' is a poem written on the death of the same child, we imagine. It is full of calm pathos."—*Lloyd's News*.

*OPINIONS OF THE PRESS UPON "SONG-BLOOM".* vii

"Barlow has a style of his own, and his images are so beautiful, and he clothes them in such choice music, that we are at once led to place him among the few great poets. His verses are full of the finest melody, and his chief theme is the greatest of human passions, Love. In reading his writings one is reminded of Petrarch. Mr. Barlow occasionally shows (as for example in his 'Lines on the Death of a Child') that he has the power to touch, with the hand of a master, other chords than those of Love. Mr. Barlow's writings are but little known as yet in this country, but we hope they may soon be more so."—*Vernon Banner* (America).



# SONG-SPRAY.

BY

GEORGE BARLOW,

AUTHOR OF "SONG-BLOOM".

LONDON:  
REMINGTON AND CO.,  
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1882.

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## DEDICATION.

TO LOUISA S. BEVINGTON.

*Thou art among the chief of those who lead  
The way ; thou bringest woman's soul to bear  
Upon our new-world thought and mak'st it fair,  
Adding flower-softness to the future's creed.  
And thou hast taken part with those who bleed  
Battling amid the turrets of despair,  
And hast borne arrows of the high keen air,—  
Shafts that around thought's iciest summits speed.*

*Therefore I singing in the early day,  
While yet the dew upon the grass is sweet  
And our hill-paths are printed by few feet,  
Bring thee these poems of the cloudland grey,  
Written on the ridge where night and morning meet,  
Ere the old faiths' stars have wholly passed away.*



# SONG-SPRAY.



2

*CHARLES KINGSLEY.*

## I.

O strong pure spirit to whom  
The leaves, the hills, the bright and bounding seas,  
The laughing whisper of the English breeze,  
Bright summer smiling through our forest trees,  
Or spring's soft bloom,  
Were gifts of present God,—what death, what tomb  
Can hold thee, or what frost-bound gloom?

## II.

Surely thou livest yet :  
Surely thy well-loved Lord hath found for thee  
By the grey waves of some celestial sea  
A home where, winged with rapture, thou mayest be ;  
The ferns are sweet  
Still as of old in Hampshire, but thy feet  
No more the pliant fern-fronds meet.

## III.

Still burst the heavy seas  
Along the shores of Devon, and the sands  
Gleam yellow underneath the moon's white hands,  
And glad girls' laughter fills the summer lands ;  
The sweet spring-breeze  
Wafts countless subtle scents across the leas ;  
The June-green deepens in the trees.

IV.

But, singer, where art thou ?  
Singer ; for poet ever at heart thou wast.  
Never, in age, the sweet gift wholly passed  
Away from thee,—thou sangest till the last ;  
    Thou singest now  
Mayhap in heaven ; new high dreams flush thy brow ;  
    Thy soul anew the gods endow.

V.

The strange wild Western shores  
That thou didst love,—wherein thy youthful dreams  
Took shape,—still bask beneath their fierce sun's beams ;  
Still over them their wondrous white moon gleams ;  
    They throb to oars  
Still,—through their forests yet the love-bird pours  
    Sounds that assail heaven's utmost doors.



## VI.

No bright ship cleaves the foam  
Of the far weird Pacific misty seas,  
Wafted by pleasure of the lazy breeze,  
Making for dim dark line of level trees,  
But thou dost roam  
In spirit along with it, and seek'st thy home  
Where slender waves the white sands comb.

## VII.

No Amyas fronts the seas  
With godlike figure at the vessel's prow  
Tall,—yet a godlike form we worship—*thou*  
Broodest angelic where the tree-tops bow  
To languid breeze ;  
Yea, crowned thou standest 'neath the strait palm-trees  
Whose fronds o'er-droop the emerald leas.

VIII.

That far land is thine home  
Beyond all lands,—save only this that found  
Delight unspoken in thy harp-string's sound  
As thou didst find delight in green wild ground  
And wild grey foam  
Of England ; if for a space thy foot did roam,  
Again ere long our hills it clomb.

IX.

And in that Western land  
The tender Rose of Torridge bloomed anew,  
And on her track the fiery good ship flew  
Manned by the old stalwart strong Devonian crew :  
But her white hand  
Flowered like a lily amid the sun-struck sand  
And fierce hearts bowed at her command.

## X.

Then Ayacanora came,  
And all her passion fell at Amyas' feet,  
Ardent with Southern blood and savage-sweet,  
And than her own swift forest fawns more fleet  
And hot as flame :  
A woman worth a strong man's toil to tame  
And bend to perfect wifely aim.

## XI.

What gifts we owe to thee !  
Never hath soul been sadder for thy song  
Or sinfuller ; but like thine East wind strong  
Thou blewest a blast that swept away all wrong ;  
Yea, like the sea  
Thou wast in thy clear splendid purity,  
And like the sun in golden glee.

XII.

The women of England came  
One-souled, one-hearted, laying upon thy tomb  
Tender rose-blossoms of their hearts' best bloom,  
And o'er the land swift swept a sudden gloom,  
And then a flame  
Of love and tender worship when thy name  
Was joined to those whom death's shores claim.

XIII.

Better we are that thou  
Hast trodden our shores and with thy radiant face  
Left spring-like memories bright in every place ;  
And, if the future full God's utmost grace  
Of heart and brow  
Christ for a moment hid from thee, God now  
Shines splendider, and all hearts bow :

## XIV.

Shines splendider for thee ;  
For through thy words God's sudden grandeur leapt  
And God's bright foot was with us while we slept  
And thrills of wondrous hope through heart-strings crept  
And filled the sea  
With marvel of sweet light and every tree  
With dawn's gold spotless purity.

## XV.

Thou knewest not of the time  
When all strong men with Christ-like face should seek  
The eternal Father's face,—so thou didst speak  
Old truths with new-born flush upon thy cheek  
And in thy rhyme  
Didst struggle upward towards the old heights sublime  
That Christ's brave footsteps dared to climb.

XVI.

The future shall transcend  
Thine utmost dreams : the soul of Man shall flower  
With undiscernible unhopèd-for power  
And England's woods a kingly race embower ;  
Yet thou, O friend,  
Thy passion of heart and fervent brain didst lend  
Unknowing towards this self-same end.

XVII.


Greater there are than thou :  
Spirits in whom the Sun of spirit shines  
Direct,—whose souls amid the mountain-pines  
Are nursed, and by the long waves' foam-capped lines ;  
Who, rugged of brow,  
The future's green untouched divine meads plough  
And only at God's own mandate bow.

## XVIII.

The Church to thee was king,  
King for a time,—when the old bright dreams less fair  
Shone and less urgent in maturer air  
And bloom of passion flamed not, and thy rare  
Pure lyre did ring  
Less oft, and seldomer thy soul did sing ;  
When weary at last down-drooped thy wing.

## XIX.

But for thy brave sweet days  
We bless thee, Kingsley ; for thy young glad voice  
Bidding each English valiant soul rejoice  
And all true spirits make heroic choice ;  
Yea, green fresh bays  
Thou wear'st for ever for those early lays  
Sung in the English bright sun's blaze.



XX.

We bless thee most of all  
For urgent fiery words that cursed and slew  
The foul hell-nightmare, smiting through and through  
The Church's armour as with sword-stroke true ;  
    Ere thou didst fall,  
Tender as Christ, imperative as Paul,  
    Flame down from heaven thou once didst call :

XXI.

Flame to consume and smite  
For ever the evil hell-dream and the band  
Of priests who fashion it with cursed hand :  
Yea forth against their myriads thou didst stand  
    With face made bright  
By open vision of God, and God's own light,—  
    Clothed in a man's unmeasured might.



## XXII.

For this we bless thee most :  
But also for the souls thou broughtest here,  
Making them more than living spirits dear,—  
For Amyas, Hereward, and for the clear  
Soul whom the host  
Of Pagans slew and sent a sinless ghost,  
Hypatia, towards heaven's eager coast.

## XXIII.

And for thy pity too  
We love thee : fair Pelagia crowneth thee  
With her own final deep sweet purity ;  
And for thy love of our own grey wild sea  
And streamlets blue  
And for all noble work thine hand did do  
We love thee, English spirit true.

XXIV.

Not one red gay sea-weed  
Upon our shores but oweth to thine hand  
Somewhat : \* strange treasures of the deep to land  
Thou brought'st and gav'st us heart to understand  
And head to heed  
All deep-ribbed flowers and shells of sandy mead,  
Teacher divine in every deed.

XXV.

And thou didst take delight  
In children too and through their fairy-land  
Didst wander, laughing with them, hand in hand : †  
In heaven around thee children-spirits band  
By day, by night,  
Now surely, and thou with face for sheer love bright  
New golden fairy-lore dost write.

\* "Glaucus." † "The Water Babies."

## XXVI.

For ever the fair feet  
Of loftiest poets linger yearningly  
Beside the early ripples of life's sea  
Where sounds the laugh of children and their glee  
In music sweet :  
There Shakespeare, Shelley, Hugo, one may meet,  
Resting awhile from mid-song's heat.

## XXVII.

Yet in first days how fierce  
And urgent was the Apollonian glow  
Of passion in thee,—how thy sword did go  
Flickering athwart the steel ranks to and fro,  
As thou didst pierce  
Ignoble souls with sword-thrust of thy verse,  
Winged as a god's swift lightning-curse !

XXVIII.

And how divinely thee  
The beauty of woman dawned on like a spell : \*  
How tenderly her girlish footstep fell ;  
How sweeter than all May-bloom in the dell  
Argemone  
Burst like a sudden blossom from the lea,  
White with all first love's purity !

XXIX.

We love and value thee  
For that creation of thine early power  
Beyond all,—that Shakespearian woman-flower,  
The whitest and the sweetest on thy bower  
Where many be—  
Valentia, Lucia, Grace : *thy* love we see  
Alone in sweet Argemone.

\* "Yeast."

## XXX.

Art thou with her to-day ?  
Was she not real ? Did never her sweet hand  
Open for thee the golden genius-land  
And was it not her real rose-breath that fanned,  
    Upon its way,  
Thy flame of valiant force,—no time can slay  
    What love's own pencil doth portray.

## XXXI.

And now thou art taken away :  
Yet still thy flowers put forth their yearly bloom  
Though thou their lover far from flowers' perfume  
Hast sought the scentless flowerless hueless tomb  
    Where all is grey  
And death's weird hands lay hold upon the day  
    And bear all bounteous things away.

XXXII.

And we will not despair :  
Somewhere thou livest, as thy flowers return  
Each year with petals that with new life burn  
And in thy Devon valleys the bright fern  
    Again is fair ;  
So thou art risen again to summer air  
    And sight of summer seas elsewhere.

*TRISTRAM AND ISEULT.*

## AN EPISODE.

So by the ever-rolling Cornish waves  
That eat the granite into countless caves  
They sat and pondered o'er their troublous past  
From that bright morn when first their vessel's mast  
Bent to the breeze that swept the Irish shore ;  
The day when Tristram young and happy bore  
Iseult as young and happy to be bride  
To Marc who ruled the Cornish foam beside :

The purple heather and the golden furze  
Stretched far before them, and the sun shone high  
In heaven ; one spake, the silver voice was hers,—  
She broke the silence, nestling yet more nigh.

“ O Tristram, soul of mine, what have we gained ?  
What flower of beauty have our hands retained ?  
The sun in heaven is sweet and high to-day,  
The furze is golden 'mid these boulders grey  
Of monstrous scattered granite ; lo ! the heather,  
One sheet of purple in the glad clear weather,  
Stretches towards the palace of King Marc,  
Above whose towers the sky's one cloud hangs dark ;  
But we,—what have we gained for all our sin ?  
Where are the roses that we thought to win ?  
Where are the lilies of untamed delight  
That thou didst promise for a circlet bright  
Which Iseult's buoyant throbbing brow should wear :—  
My soul is burthened by this summer air.



My soul is wearied by these labouring seas ;  
My spirit is sickened by this perfumed breeze ;  
My heart is straitened 'mid this boundless sky ;  
Would God that we were dead : yea, thou and I.  
What, what will be the end ? I long for flowers  
That fade not at the touch of earth's cold showers ;  
Thy kisses are not sweet, as once each kiss  
Seemed the chief rose of heaven's most utter bliss.  
I am aweary : almost I could pity  
King Marc : would that in some unknown fair city  
I might pass days of labour till my death :— ”

But Tristram answered, catching eager breath :  
“ Speak not so, lady : think of all delights  
We two have known together ; summer nights  
When here in Cornwall every rose seemed part  
Of one wide-beating joyous amorous heart  
And that heart ours : rememberest thou how first  
After love's draught awoke our endless thirst

Our close lips clung, and how we swore to be  
Twin fair linked spirits of love eternally,  
Living not far apart—nay living near,  
Each spirit to each in purest union dear,  
Too great for sinning,—an example high  
Of how true love once wakened, cannot die,  
Nor yet will suffer lovers to obscure  
White hearts, white hands, by passionate act impure.  
Oh mindest thou the great old vows we swore  
Ere, all too swift, our vessel touched the shore  
Of Cornwall : how we twain would help the king  
My uncle, yet with joy of passion sing,—  
With joy of secret passion nursed between  
Thy bosom white and this strong breast, O Queen !  
Rememberest thou, Iseult ? Rememberest thou  
How Marc my uncle when the glittering prow  
Of our love's vessel touched his Cornish strand  
Came forth and took thee trembling by the hand,  
And how across the skies before so blue  
A sudden wintriest gust, fast-darkening, blew ?

Rememberest thou how for a time endured  
Our vows, and passion lingered unobscured,  
High, spotless, dauntless,—white as the white flag  
Of our fair ship, or yonder gleaming crag :  
Sweet, sweet it seemed to stand while others fell ;  
Sweet all high thoughts and high desires to tell  
Each to the other ; dreams of knighthood high,  
Of splendid prowess, fame that should not die.  
Yea, ever as I think King Marc bestowed  
With open eyes and evil heart that glowed  
Like hell's own fire within—ah, Satan's glance  
Of his !—upon our passion every chance.  
He hated thee, mine Iseult ; and his hate  
Flung for our fall wide open every gate,  
Hurled for our sin from the hinges every door :  
The gentler, softer thou,—he lusted more.  
And lo ! his lust took on this evil form,  
Thee, sweet, to hurl adown black sorrow's storm  
Like a white bird that struggles 'gainst the blast ;  
This he would do ! into such action passed

His hate : he put temptation, honey-lipped,  
Upon thy path,—then smote the mouth that sipped.  
Then smote the mouth ! ah Iseult, one fell day,  
Dost thou remember ? when the sky was grey  
With clouds and storm, and when the hard-pressed foam  
Curling flew landwards, whirling o'er thine home,—  
Dost thou remember meeting me in tears,  
Fresh from Marc's savage temper, fresh from sneers  
And gibes of cutting tongue :—thy neck of snow  
Red from thine husband's hand,—hot from a blow ?

“ Dost thou remember ? That blow sealed our fate :  
*His* hand flung open then the one last gate.

“ Then came a time of dreams : of sweet desire,  
Far sweeter than of old : of nights of fire,  
Days of fierce sun, evenings when heaven seemed close ;  
For then, the first time, blossomed our full rose.  
Then the first time we knew what passion meant ;

The maiden veil that hid desire was rent,  
The sweet robe sundered,—and thy body of flame  
Was as white fire indeed, no more a name,  
A lovely whispered mystery unseen,  
But mine, not Marc's,—and mine for aye, my Queen.  
The night, the night : summer it was, and Marc  
Away : our passion lighted all the dark  
As with gold countless stars, and the sweet smell  
Of all thine hair caressed me,—as it fell  
In one dark amorous encircling flood  
About me, loosed from golden-bordered hood,  
And first our hands clutched eagerly, and then  
Swift-beating breast met tremulous bosom ; when,  
Lastly, with rapture crowning every sense,  
Lips thrilled to lips in the divine intense  
Inevitable inseparable kiss.  
Iseult ! Iseult ! hast thou forgotten *this* ?  
The same Iseult—ever the same—thou art,  
And I, I bear the same, same-bounding heart,  
That beats for ever with swift equal tides

For thee : the fairest, sweetest of all brides  
That knights have won,—yea fairer unto me,  
Fairer and softer, lovelier, than is she  
Who crowneth Lancelot with her bosom's rose :—  
But these are thoughts of sorrow, sweet, of woes,  
Of troubles,—sad thou art ; let me once more  
Wake with my harp the old echoes of the shore.”

So Tristram took his gold-strung harp, and sang,  
And all the rocks and the far uplands rang  
To his sweet singing,—and Iseult the Queen  
Yearned to his voice and watched, the while serene  
Slow waves before them brake the sea's dull green.

“ The old joys were not sweet as joy that finds us  
Now truly, sweetheart, thou and I are one :  
The moon of soft love sank ; now passion blinds us

With burning rays from its far fiercer sun,  
Crowning the miscalled evil we have done.

“ Joy is a gift that shall endure for ever ;  
The sorrows are the swift-winged wraiths that fade :  
Death, all too weak, our spirits may not sever :  
Iseult, sweet Iseult, be not thou afraid ;  
Love lends his strength and splendid wrath to aid.

“ Yea Love is on our side : who reads our story  
In future years shall listen to the roll  
Of passion's white pure waves that drave their hoary  
Crests far beyond the force of feebler soul  
To follow,—touching an immortal goal.”

But Iseult's face darkened the while he sang,  
And upward to her feet at length she sprang

And stretched out snowy hand ; “ Give me the harp,”  
She said, and bitter was her tone and ‘sharp,  
Though tremulous too : “ I likewise have a song  
That trembles through my soul in wave-beats strong ;  
Lonely the other morn within my bower  
I made the song ; ‘thou know’st not Iseult’s power ! ”

And then she sang ; with swift grey eyes that sought  
In his to mark the reflex of her thought,  
And swift white fingers ; while her bosom heaved,  
As through the melody her spirit grieved.

“ Sweet were the old joys,—sweet is passion, lover !  
Yet Iseult craves for pleasure deeper yet,  
Fain would she some undying joy discover ;  
Upon some stormless rock her soft foot set,  
Beyond repentance, change, remorse, regret.



“The flowers that once were sweet are spent and bloom-  
less ;

The songs that once we sang are silent now ;  
The world were glad,—if but the world were tombless !  
This morning one grey hair above my brow  
Gleamed through the black loose locks,—behold it,  
thou !


“That grey thread spake of silence and sun-setting ;  
It spake of glory that shall be no more ;  
I need a love past anguish, past regretting,—  
A love that breaks upon no deathly shore  
Wave-like, when love's first loveliness is o'er.”

Now, while they sang, across the fair blue sky  
Clouds many and boding storm began to fly  
And the sweet sun was darkened, and the seas  
Were touched to white by the fast-wakening breeze ;

And so, a wind of sorrow o'er their souls  
Swept,—bright furze-blossoms over windy knolls  
Flew, eddied round them by the chillier blast,  
And with the change of scene their spirits fast  
Darkened and saddened likewise, till he spake :  
“ Iseult, thy strange sad song hath power to wake  
Within me memories buried ; it derives  
Its strength from marvels of our mutual lives.  
But what now, sweet ? Art thou so tired of love ?  
Is this the first thing to grow weary of ?  
Truly I love thee : yet if thou art tired,  
If change of love is by thine heart desired,  
Here am I, ready far away to roam,  
Beyond that utmost stretch of glittering foam,—  
Ready to seek new lands and newer loves,  
Where white arms shine 'mid perfumed orange-groves,  
And where the roses of the amorous South  
Match, vainly, tints with many a maiden's mouth.  
Yea, we are old in love, too old in joy ;  
Pleasure began for us when I a boy,

When thou a girl, beneath thy castle high  
In Ireland, watched the changes of the sky,  
Marking till eve from radiant dawn of day  
The blue sky severed by those turrets grey,  
As o'er the lawns or under shadier trees  
We wandered, threading trim-kept pleasancess :  
Now we are old ; thy mouth is far less red ;  
The blast of winter wanders round thine head ;  
A grey hair, saidest thou ? I see them shine  
Upon that forehead where Love loved to twine  
The endless flawless rose ! and now thine hands  
Are no more lilies, loveliest of all lands,  
Thy voice is harsh ; Iseult, I will away  
Beyond the foam, beyond the breakers grey ;  
Passion shall touch me with her touch of gold,  
And love as warm, as soft, as love of old,  
Shall circle me ; God's pleasant world is wide :—  
Man's spirit is straitened by one arduous bride.  
The time hath come for change : yea, thou art tired !  
Nor more by me is thine embrace desired.

Arms wait me far more gentle, and as white,  
And eyes fulfilled with even as tender light  
As thine eyes once—before they changed to dark,  
Loving, I hold, at length thy noble Marc,—  
His value seen at last,—his face, his voice,  
Longed for : Iseult, thou hast made a worthy choice  
With all the wisdom of a woman : Go—  
Kiss Marc : uncover, love, thy breast of snow  
Before him : touch him tenderly : it may be  
His spirit shall yearn with late true love of thee,  
And thou shalt find late rapture at his side ;  
At length a loved and ever-loving bride !  
Nay ! weep not, sweetheart ; tears are but pretence ;  
Thy time for weeping is when far from hence  
I pass the faithless kisses from thy mouth  
To some red lips, far redder, in the South.  
Marc is sufficient ; Tristram is a dream !  
A dream of girlish love ! a fitting theme  
Is our love after all for maidens wan :—  
Now seek I passion worthy of a man.



Women there are, women there are : thy song  
Has made my spirit rejoice ; now am I strong,  
Knowing my strength of manhood,—weak art thou,—  
Go home to Marc, child-Iseult : bend and bow  
Low at his feet : it may be that to-night  
In soft arms he shall reap untold delight,  
If, haply, he comes home not wearied out  
By strange hot kisses, nor with drunken shout,  
As often with his followers came he home  
When their boats' lights, red-glimmering o'er white foam,  
Gave in the bygone days the signal fit  
To us i' the tower that love's lamp but just lit  
By us perhaps, must fall a broken torch :  
Then as we heard the splay feet in the porch  
Pollute the marble, the last clinging kiss,  
Our one—the best—for Marc that night to miss.

“’Tis over : over : kisses are but poor ;  
Thy song has said as much : they but endure

For one short summer ; then Love's birds forsake  
Their tree of the season and with laughter shake  
Wild plumes adown the breeze " :—but Iseult said,  
" Peace : hath not yet thine arrow quivering sped,  
Flown, reached its Marc ? The seemly deed is done :  
Lo ! o'er the Atlantic sets our once bright sun  
Befouled by clouds ; I am not now a girl  
By whom thy harsh words like blown leaflets whirl,  
Unharming and untouching " :—Then she rose,  
Pointed to where the sea surged ; " Tristram goes,"  
She said, " to seek white arms across the foam ;  
I go to seek mine husband in his home ;  
I was mistaken ; Tristram I had thought  
A perfect noble knight : his love I sought,  
His endless knightly aid : but he hath spurned  
Away the lonely spirit that craved and yearned ;  
Go, seek thy soft caresses, and forget  
Me, Irish Iseult : we have never met."  
But Tristram in his lover's anger turned ;  
Nor once looked back at the wet eyes that yearned

Towards him departing and the trembling hands :  
He strode across the far-stretched dimpling sands  
That yielded deep at each pain-stricken tread :  
Iseult stood upright ; in white hand one red  
Small flower she crushed and soft the petals fell  
Like drops of blood : but when a darkling dell  
Had hidden Tristram as he turned inland  
She let the whole crushed flower fall from her hand  
Unheeding, and with hard grey eyes that burned  
Dry now and hot and fevered, unconcerned  
In outward show, passed murmuring a low tune  
Homeward. The sun had set, wan rose the moon.

*THE RESURRECTION OF VENUS.*

From the new white waves every year she rises  
And brings new bloom  
To earth and tender soft undreamed surprises  
And fresh perfume.

Splendid, a new-born rose, a flower begotten  
Each year anew,  
She quits the old plains and lanes whose boughs hang rotten  
Where rosebuds grew,



To each, as each awakes to Venus' splendour,  
His time brought nigh,  
She seems a maiden white, a girl most tender,  
Whose soul doth sigh !

The rose, the violet, and the lily gracious  
In soft sweet arms  
She holds,—and thrills the hills and forests spacious  
With unseen charms.

Never was woman half so proud and peerless,—  
So each one dreams ;  
Each bounds to meet her, trusting her and fearless,  
With glance that gleams.

Each knows not—nay how should they? that she has lavished  
In years gone by  
Countless caresses : has been sold and ravished,—  
Her lips drunk dry !

They know not—how should youth know? that her splendour

So soft, so white,

Not for their clinging lips alone is tender,

Nor for one night.

They know not that her breath made roses sweeter

Ere English seas

Heard English voices ; as a maid they greet her

And clasp her knees.

Ah ! English youths ; the Grecian waves beheld her

Long ere ye came !

Greek arms and Roman straining oars impelled her

O'er seas of flame.

In old-world forests she more white than lily

Has, flower-like, gleamed ;

Her eyes have flashed o'er trackless regions hilly

Till the hills dreamed !

And now late in the arduous day ye find her,  
                                And ye are strong  
And think to fether her white neck and bind her  
                                And lead along.

But ye know not that she has fettered races  
With white soft hand :  
That round her crowd dark bearded haughty faces  
From every land !

Think ye that English hearts and hands can bind her  
Whom not these bound ?  
Or that the old hands and proud hearts have resigned her  
Whom ye have found ?

Is she an English rose ? Was she not sweeter  
 Than English bloom  
 Long ere the first love laughed in English metre  
 Through English gloom ?

The strange old lands and wild fierce cities held her

Whom ye adore :

In Athens, Rome, and Carthage she the elder

Made peace and war.

And ever through her dark eyes soft and tender

The old strange sweet smile

Gleamed, and her marble neck's imperious splendour

And her limbs' wile

Made mad the men of the old swift regal races,

Made all hearts wild ;

And then she used another of all her faces,

Became a child,—

A girl for some new soul or newer nation ;

A tender maid

Descending starlike to some earthly station,

Soft and afraid.

So ever along the blood-dyed awful ages

Her footstep white

Shone ; ever around her the thick warfare rages

And her limbs' light.

And all her body's perfume waxes sweeter

As the ages creep

Towards their accomplishment with footstep fleeter

And men's hearts sleep.

It is not now one rose ; but every blossom

Hath formed a part

Of her far-reaching multitudinous bosom


And her wide heart ;

And all the scents of summers many-scented

On her lips sleep,

And all the bloom of nights when love contented

In rapture deep



Reposed upon her breast till daylight found him  
And his delight  
Faded,—till once again the darkness bound him,  
The dim sweet night.

The glory of passions endless crowns and binds her  
Fair gold great head ;  
And endless Junes make search for her and find her,  
And bring their red

Vast coils innumerable of clinging roses  
And all their heat  
And multiiform and nameless shameless posies,  
Some fierce, some sweet.

So, English lovers, when ye have possessed her,  
Remember ye  
Whose lips and former passionate hands caressed her,  
By what bright sea.

And think not that her eyes, like virgin fountains,  
Are soft and deep  
For you alone : by the old forgotten mountains  
Where dead gods sleep

They smiled as virginal and pure and simple  
And calm and clear ;  
Her soft cheek showed the changeless maddening dimple  
That maddens here.

Nathless possess her : she is passing tender  
And passing sweet ;  
And all her unexhausted deathless splendour  
And her heart's heat

Are ever the same and will be : though the summers  
Fade quite away  
And ye grow old and all the world's new-comers  
While ye grow grey

---

Laugh at the portal, yet shall she renewing  
Her youth each year  
Smile, as wild mortals ever her pursuing  
Assail her ear

With the old wild wail of worship and of madness  
And wrath and woe ;  
Your years of sorrow, your swift days of gladness,  
Others shall know.

But ever couched in meadow-sweet and roses  
She changeless lies,  
The changeless spirit of spring,—and love reposes  
Within her eyes,

And laughter rests upon her lips for ever  
And never tires ;  
Nor can the spirit of joy from her hands sever  
His harps and lyres.



Beautiful, deathless, sweet-limbed, wondrous, holy,

Divine, supreme,

Immaculate, a maiden pure and lowly,

A gold-haired dream,

A woman passionate and wild and fearful,

A mouth most sweet,

Eyes exquisite and soft with love and tearful,

Breasts where flowers meet,

Such is she, such she hath,—and all the ages

But swell her song

And turn for her fresh perfumed passion-pages,

A ceaseless throng.

And she the very spirit of pure dominion

To whom God gives

Insatiable and fierce fatigueless pinion

That all that lives

May worship and obey and may revere her,—

She springs afresh

From each new summer's seas with white and clearer

Foam-radiant flesh,

And fills the flowers with all her beauty deathless

And fills the air

Till the deep skies yearn o'er her pale and breathless,

Swept by her hair.

*TO C. C.*

Nay! not a "poppy," but a wild white rose,  
Pure, sweet, and tender,—clinging to the stem  
Like a soft-hued and gracious diadem,—  
Fresh with the wind that o'er the North Sea blows.  
Rose-like the gentle spirit within thee grows  
And, though surrounding folk thy life condemn;  
Thou need'st not waver nor take heed of them,  
If thine own heart its clear vocation knows.

Therefore, white Northern Rose, be not afraid :  
Thy mission is to gladden and to heal,

And, if thy life's true task be long delayed

And tangled boughs the rosebud's shape conceal,

It is that more than that one Northern glade

May in the end thy power and bounty feel.

*THE INCARNATION OF VENUS.*

O subtle form by the grey cliff-top standing,

What art thou, sweet ?

Whence came that glance so swift and so commanding,

That swift heart-beat ?

Art thou a woman, or diviner, prouder,

More fierce, more fair,

Made to be hymned by passionate harp-strings louder

And lyres more rare ?

If women are most white, then art thou whiter ?

More fair indeed ?

Thine hair more wonderful, thy bosom brighter ?

Is there more speed

In thy swift foot than in the feet of flying

Dear soft-foot maids ?

Dost thou, love, triumph when the others sighing

Wind wind-blown braids ?

Hast thou within thine eyes a flame that brightens

The land and sea

And all the moonlit far-spread prospect lightens,

Far vale and lea ?

Doth the corn-land for thee glow yet more golden,

The fields more bright,—

Are the far purple hills to thee beholden

For strange sweet light ?

Hast thou the hand of goddess on the shallows  
Of waste grey sea ?  
Dost thou make green the soft low-lying fallows  
That yearn for thee ?

Dost thou bestow upon the woods their splendour  
When autumn fires  
The leaves with touch most passionately tender  
And flame inspires ?

Do the white Northern waves their well-loved daughter  
Behold in thee ?  
Art thou the queen of all these leagues of water,  
This strange fierce sea ?

Is there in thee the mystic full completeness  
That Venus brings ?  
Within thy breast the scents of sudden sweetness  
That fill her wings ?

Are there upon thy mouth the goddess' roses  
And in thine arms  
The subtle force that round a lover closes  
Resistless charms?

Hast thou within thy lips her power attractive  
That lifts and slays ?  
Hast thou been through the viewless ages active,  
In far wild days ?

And now thou standest girl-like yet most splendid  
On this gold shore  
And all the winds and waves in one song blended  
Thy beauty adore :

And all the flowers in million hidden places  
At thy feet kneel  
And love with fiery wings thy footstep chases  
And fierce appeal :



And I gaze at thee, loving, yet not loving,  
But marvelling more,  
Feeling as though my trembling foot were moving  
O'er some strange shore ;

And ever, when I see thee, through the splendour  
Of thy strange eyes  
Grey-green and cruel and swift and great and tender  
Sweet magic flies,

And thou art Venus, and I bend before thee,  
                                And thou art white,  
And in the sea's song I thy bard adore thee,  
                                And in its light,

And in the ripples that o'er ten thousand rivers  
Leap high and fail ;  
And in the haze that o'er the mountain quivers ;  
The wind's wild wail ;

And in the chant of thunder-clouds sonorous,

And in the waves'

Moonlit ineffable approachless chorus

That rings round graves,

And in the laughter of the wide creation

I laugh with thee

O thou, love's marvellous mystic incarnation,

Born of the sea !

All poets have loved thee ; thou the same for ever

Shinest o'er their dreams :

They shudder, faint, but they escape thee never,

Nor thine eyes' gleams.

They shudder for joy and faint for very wonder

When thou dost come

Crowned with the lightning, robed about with thunder,

Making earth dumb.

They all have loved thee, and they all have maddened  
At thine embrace,  
Crowned, killed, and risen again, and slain and saddened,  
At thy same face !

They all have loved thee,—but not one has found thee,  
Nor held nor chained,  
Nor in the embrace irrevocable bound thee,  
Nor thee retained.

Thou crownest them with the old unearthly splendour  
Of mouth and limb,  
Sweet, imperturbable, past passion tender,  
Till hearts grow dim :

But though they follow alert and full of daring

They fail to keep

Thy living glory, though all alike are sharing

Thy sombre sleep :

The sleep that follows after passion truly

They all may share ;

But while they share it, thou art twining newly

Thy brown bright hair ;

And ever anew thou art incarnate, lady,

In new sweet form,

Now manifest 'mid valleys calm and shady

And screened from storm ;

Now by the old white waves where thy birth once gladdened

The wandering foam ;

There I beheld thee, gazed at thee and maddened,—

In thy first home.

And ever the same madness charms and seizes

Both heart and hand

When brows are swept by sacred summer breezes

From thy far land ;

And ever through the din of daily labour

If music speaks,

With wings more keen than keen blue-bladed sabre

My winged soul seeks

The far white seas where I, sweet, first beheld thee

And in wild dream

Knew that the very might of Love impelled thee,

And marked the gleam

Of Venus' eyes in thine, superb, entrancing,

Beyond all speech

Divine, with the old immortal laughter dancing

That the old gods teach.

For that swift laughter fills thine eyes and flowing

From these to mine

Fills all my urgent heart with fiery glowing

Hot quick fierce wine,

And lifts me far beyond the daily portal

Of daily deeds

Towards the clear fathomless far skies immortal

Whereto love speeds.

Art thou then woman, or art thou the burning

Sweet Venus-form

Ever to earth in newer shape returning,

More soft, more warm,

Maddening us more with blossom-like sweet bosom

And new girl-speech,

Ever an untouched unimagined blossom

For love to reach?

Art thou upon the old grey cliff reposing

A woman, sweet,—

Or are the gods again through thee disclosing

Their hearts' wild heat

And art thou sent, with the eyes that lured all singers,

On one soul still

With perfect touch of pure imprisoning fingers

To work thy will ?

*APOLLO AND VENUS.*

Hast thou for ages heartless and regardless  
Held on thine even way,  
Now sung by passionate yearning hearts, now bardless  
Save for thy wild waves' lay ?

Hast thou pierced saddened souls beyond all number  
And made worlds wail and weep,  
Yet changed not thy soft unimpassioned slumber  
Nor moved thy lashes deep ?



Hast thou reclined on beds of sweet-lipped flowers  
Only less sweet than thou,  
And watched the slow wings of the amorous hours,  
Calm and unmoved of brow?

Hast thou been than the trembling sea-shine whiter,  
More pure than wave-born foam,  
Tenderer than woodland meadow-sweet and brighter  
Than flowers that fill thine home?

Have men fallen bleeding at thy feet and round thee,  
Souls great and sweet and strong,  
And with their passion of ardent being crowned thee,—  
An endless ruined throng?

And hast thou mocked love,—till thy lord Apollo  
With swift foot after thee  
Sprang,—and the wave's arch and its lustrous hollow  
Of green smooth curling sea

Failed then to shield thee : for the great god knew thee

Though clothed in human form

And his gold swift unerring dart smote through thee,

Yea, through thy bosom warm ;

And he now robed in flesh again o'ercame thee

And held thee in embrace,

Gifted with power alone to seize and tame thee

And kiss thy glowing face.

And now art thou on him the more dependent

That all else strove and failed

To hold thy body elusive, sweet, and splendent,

In ceaseless roses mailed ?

He has brought a godlike force of love to bind thee

And force of skies and seas

And passion's glance that seeks thee and must find thee

And June-sweet pinion-breeze

And mouth that holds thee when it once has touched thee,—

Lips fragrant and divine,

And hand that loosens not when it has clutched thee

The tresses it would twine.

Thou yieldest unto him : for godlike passion

Must ever conquer thee ;

Mortals thou conquerest,—not in thy strong fashion

And not with force of sea

And not with valour of clouds and might of waters

Can these poor mortals seek ;

They have their brides among the earth's fair daughters,

Fair, temporal, sweet, and weak.

But thou not temporal nor of passing rapture

But crowned with stars and skies

Needest in him who would thy beauty capture

Fire and the eternal eyes,

And no ephemeral and obscure devotion  
Or silent sorrowing heart,  
But all the song of thy loud-singing ocean  
Of which thou art a part

Upon his lips, and in his hands to bring thee  
Pleasures that know no end,  
And endless amorous valorous voice to sing thee,  
And golden bow to bend.

All these thou findest in thy lord Apollo  
Who bringeth starry eyes  
And flowers from every deep green-cinctured hollow  
And the great light of skies

And the deep voice of seas and breath of mountains  
And whisper of the air  
Made sweet at brink of fresh fern-laden fountains  
And his own face most fair

And his own strength to conquer and to hold thee

Made his, O queen, indeed,—

And his fierce arms to gather thee and fold thee

And magic harp to plead

And his red mouth to cling to thine, a flower

As sweet and far more strong,

And for eternal years the conquering power

Of his sole deathless song.

*ARTS MARTYRS.*

O queen of all Art's martyrs, who bestowest  
    Their more than mortal crown  
And ever in their inmost spirits glowest,  
    Be gracious and look down ;

Look down upon thy toiling sons and daughters  
    And lend thy holy aid,  
For lo ! we struggle, tossed by wild white waters,  
    And perish in cold shade.

Yea, for a season thou our queen art gracious  
And then the vision grows  
Dimmer and more dim, and thy woodlands spacious  
Made sweet with breath of rose

Fade slowly, and thy sacred golden portal  
Is closed and all dreams sleep,  
And we who in thy presence were immortal  
Are chained in darkness deep.

Grant us thine help unfailing and redeeming ;  
Support us through the night ;  
Shine thou upon us with thy soft eyes dreaming,  
And with thy bosom bright.

Not crowns we ask in heaven or jewels precious,  
Not palaces of pearl ;  
Not golden robes, rewards divine and specious,—  
But where thy wild waves curl

Along wild shores we seek thee and would win thee,  
O queen of all things sweet ;  
Having sure part and share eternal in thee,—  
Thy bosom for retreat,—

Thy mighty hands for saviours and for healers,  
Thy lips for crown and light,  
Thy voice to soothe us, strong unwearied kneelers  
Before thine altar white.

The heavenly crowns might fade,—but thou eternal  
O Beauty, bride and queen,  
Not crowned with roses fading and diurnal  
In the highest skies art seen.

Thou art the God of all the yearning ages,  
Thou gatherest them to rest,—  
Yea every soul that weeps and each that rages,  
Within thy perfect breast.



Thou only art God,—And all the years adore thee

Crying, “ Holy, O our sweet ! ”

The undying angel-hosts fall low before thee

And kiss thy queenly feet.

To every rose thou art the sweet white sister,

To every flower the bloom,—

No lily is white but thou more white hast kissed her

And lent her heart-perfume.

And we who are oft-times weary and heart-broken

Lift up our souls to thee !

Though all men scorn us, yet we have for token

Thy smile and thy blue sea.

Thy waves we have and all thy winds and seasons

Of snow and rain and sun :

Clothed round about with these we face man's treasons,

Till all our race is run.

We have thy flowers and bowers and all thy splendour,  
Yea, sweetheart, we have thee,—  
Thee than thy softest summer winds more tender,  
And whiter than thy sea,

And purer than thy skies that beam above us,  
Brighter than every star,—  
Safe are we if thou, and only thou, dost love us,  
From evil that would mar.

Thou touchest us,—and all the tumult ceases  
And we are rocked to rest ;  
Our foemen's swords are snapped in helpless pieces,  
Shorn is their every crest.

Yea, though the day be long and full of labour,  
At even give us light ;  
Though pain to weariness be closest neighbour,  
And friends and lovers smite,

Though thorns be ours and no more flowers be tender,  
Nor woodland ways made fair  
Ever again with the old long-vanished splendour,  
And no song thrill the air,

Though no soul understands and lonely vision  
Be ours for evermore,—  
Yet we are not alone nor left in prison  
If thou whom we adore

More than all gods beloved and crowned of nations  
Be with us in the gloom ;  
More than reward for speechless tribulations  
Is one breath of thy bloom,—

One sound upon the waves of thy soft laughter,  
One vision of thy feet  
Upon the enraptured shore,—though death leapt after  
That deathless vision sweet.

Ours be the thorns and thine the flowers,—but love us,—

Forsake us not, O queen ;

Bend in thine holy midnight sky above us

And in thy white clouds' sheen ;

And in the murmur and rush of many waters

When the autumn breezes smite

The seas, speak thou to thy sad sons and daughters

Who struggle towards thy light.

And strengthen us that nought may move or turn us

From Art's one holy way ;

Though cold nights chill and blazing noontides burn us

And dark foes seek to sway :

Yea, though we stand forlorn of mortal aiding,

Yet are we not forlorn

Nor wholly left to man's malign upbraiding

And senseless ceaseless scorn,

For though alone we are not alone when splendid  
    Thou shatterest with thy might  
The darkness round us like tomb-sides extended,  
    And lo ! the dark is light :

And lo ! the music of thy coming lingers  
    Like dawn upon the seas,  
And at the touching of thy tremulous fingers  
    Thy harp sounds through the breeze ;

And we are saved, and all our hearts are gladdened  
    Through which the world's spears sprang,—  
We who were mocked and disbelieved and maddened,  
    Though still we fought and sang.

But now more heaven-like than the heaven of heaven  
    Wherein God sits with thee  
Thou springest forth, with breath more sweet than even  
    In summer o'er the sea,

And power as God's, O Beauty, and dominion

Within thy sacred hands ;

And sleep and rest at touching of thy pinion

Fall soft o'er seas and lands ;

And o'er us too falls in the old sweet fashion

A measureless soft dream


Wherethrough, intense as God's, divine with passion,

Thine eyes, most fiery, gleam.

*WHAT SHALL BE : A SONG OF  
WEARINESS.*

I.

Ah me ! what strange relief when never more  
By hill or lake or shore  
The tender summer airs for us are sweet,—  
When no flowers front our feet.  
When the last sun has risen, the last moon set,  
Then shall we not forget ?  
When the last laughing red mouth has been kissed,  
We'll fly, and not be missed !  
When the last gracious love-word has been said,  
We'll seek the loveless dead  
And bring them songs that found on graceless earth  
Just soil enough for birth



But neither suns nor moons nor stars to shield  
    Their growth in fallow field  
Nor love of hearers nor desire of souls  
    Who cluster round earth's goals.

II.

Ah ! when the weary weary weary way  
    Is traversed and the grey  
Dim breakers desolate of death's grim sea  
    Surge and advance and flee,  
So near at last we hear their salt mouths sing,  
    What peace their song shall bring !  
For then at last we know that no more flowers  
    Shall flame for us in bowers  
And that love's message shall no more mislead  
    Nor passion's bright heart bleed  
Nor feet that struggle on the temporal way  
    Be duped, and led astray.



The golden valleys will be full of corn  
And great suns greet the morn ;  
The purple hills will flame with far-spread heather  
In the blue solemn weather ;  
The woods will all be scented from the crowd  
Of meadow-sweet wind-bowed ;  
The seas will laugh and all the breezes sing ;  
The black-berry copse will ring  
Just as of old to merry maidens' mirth  
And all the same old earth  
Be veiled in May-bloom and in jocund green  
And rathe flowers peep between  
The Enravelled foliage and close-clustered stems  
With nodding diadems  
And all the innumerable founts and rills and brooks  
That permeate dusky nooks  
Shall babble onward, and the hedge shall shine  
With August eglantine  
And lovers' lips shall meet,—but we shall know  
No more that this is so.

III.

The weary flowers shall find us then no more

Nor the waves sound on shore ;

Nor fierce desires of wayward temporal things

Then agitate our wings ;

Nor mad capricious passion sweeter than

Furze-scent when it began

And far more arid than the arid sea

When once its first wild glee

Lessened,—shall reach us in that silent land

Where soon our feet shall stand.

Never shall sweet scent rouse us any more

Nor beauty round us pour

Ineffable desire and splendid grace

Of her tumultuous face

And all the urgent rapture of her wings

Whereto grey sorrow clings.

Not gold nor black nor auburn hair, nor brown,

Not one most sweet rose-crown,

Not sweetest smiling of a woman's face  
Nor her most tender grace  
Nor whitest bosom filled with forest-balm  
Shall lift us from our calm,—  
The sacred calm unending and supreme  
That follows every dream,—  
The terrible pure calm that holy death  
Seals with her signet-breath,—  
The calm whereto all we, swift spirits, go  
As the years onward flow,—  
The final calm that never trump shall break  
Nor love's own whisper wake.

## IV.

Not all the lures that lured us once shall then  
     Speak and be heard again :  
 Not summer laughter in the leafiest trees  
     Nor June-sweet breath of breeze

Nor June-soft flutter of foliage in the air  
Nor gorse-bloom deep and rare  
With subtle scent that steeps us in a dream  
Wherethrough strange phantoms stream.  
Nought of these things shall rouse us from our sleep ;  
Not groan of thunder deep  
Nor splendid red attire of autumn leaves  
Whereat the love-wind grieves  
Nor golden August smiling 'mid the corn  
Nor crimson jocund morn  
Nor village rebeck sounding o'er the plain  
Nor tanned autumnal grain  
Nor monstrous murmur of Decembral waves  
That triumph o'er men's graves  
Nor moonlit lisp of ripples as they march  
'Neath the moon's silver arch  
Nor splendour of the innumerable stars  
And all their glowing cars  
Nor blue-black inlets of the mountain-lake  
Where russet rushes shake

Nor briony-berries with their flaming red  
     Nor campion's milk-white head  
 Nor gentianella pure and skiey-blue,  
     Heaven-exquisite in hue,—  
 Nor pink geraniums, nor the star-wort green  
     That in the trench is seen  
 Nor speedwell tender as the heaven's own eye  
     Nor tufts of grass that sigh  
 In the June-wind with blossom-laden crests  
     Nor the white lilies' breasts,—  
 Not one thing of these things so passing fair  
     Shall make us as we were  
 Or lift from slumber our desirous eyes  
     That yearn not for new skies  
 But only for the immitigable sleep  
     Endless, unbroken, deep.

V.

And shall God's heaven or gold harps rouse us then,  
     We wearied-out dead men,

When all these fragrant fair things cannot rouse  
Or flood our narrow house  
With new desire and sweet, and bring new joy  
Wherewith to sport and toy?  
What hope for lyres and harps in heaven, or sweet  
Sound as of angels' feet,—  
What can their utmost efforts pale and spent  
Bring dead souls of content?  
Can they rouse dead hearts when a sweet live rose  
Wherein the summer glows  
Had nought of power to rouse,—when woman's breath  
Failed to undo our death?  
Whom woman cannot wake is dead indeed  
Past hope of heaven or creed,—  
Him shall the utmost thunders fail to wake  
Who lives not for her sake,  
And all God's tremors of judgment pass him by  
Who in spite of her would die.  
If the red luscious mouth of woman-rose  
Can lift us not, who knows

What joy can lift us or what hope can bloom  
    Yet, on our hopeless tomb ?  
Yea, she lifts not,—we are in peace at last  
    And all our life is passed,  
Joys, sorrows, passions, splendours, all are gone,  
    Not one frail bud lives on,  
And men forget us though they hear our song  
    Still, for its voice is strong,—  
Hear it in sighing of the insatiate waves  
    And wintry wind that raves  
And in the summer whisper of the leaves  
    Trembling round cottage-eaves  
And in the heart of women too it sounds  
    And its live breath abounds.

VI.

But we return not : never never more  
    Shall all our hearts be sore

With the sheer travail and laborious care  
    Life gave for robe to wear ;  
Passion and love have done for us their best  
    And white hands have caressed  
And rabid mouths have cursed and many have railed  
    And red swords have assailed  
And roses have been sweet and violets blue  
    Bathed in translucid dew  
And gardens wonderful have held us deep  
    Hidden in magic sleep  
And tender arms have with their gracious care  
    Made many seasons fair  
And mouths ephemeral have seduced our own  
    With their ephemeral tone  
And lips eternal sacred and divine  
    Have kissed us for a sign  
And on the lonely footpath we have bled  
    Till purple flowers and red  
Sprang in our traces,—many moons have shone  
    And gay suns waved us on



And fields innumerable of swaying green  
                     Upon our path been seen  
 And waves have tempted us with glittering blue  
                     Seductive transient hue  
 And mountainous tides have foamed across our path  
                     Terrible in white wrath  
 And sometimes pain hath cradled us to rest  
                     Half with a mother's breast  
 And agony our very souls hath wrung,—  
                     And through it all we've sung,—  
 And through it all we've struggled towards the high  
                     Sheer unattempted sky,—  
 And now the strife is over and we sleep,—  
                     And what we've planted, reap.

VII.

But who shall wake us ?    Shall we slumber long,  
                     Silent, devoid of song,  
 Or shall we bring to lower lands a voice  
                     Bidding dead hearts rejoice,—

A breath of England and the English seas,  
    A whisper of the breeze,  
A message to the English harps that sleep  
    In deathland-valleys deep,  
Bidding them know that we on earth retain  
    The memory of their reign  
And that from earliest singer to the last  
    Their melodies have passed  
Into the heart of England, making fair  
    The fountains of her air  
And making strong the splendour of her seas  
    And vocal her great breeze  
And filling all her deep proud heart with might,  
    Her regal eyes with light,  
Her hands with valour and her face with pure  
    Rich joy that doth endure :  
Raising her by their song above all lands  
    And giving with wide hands  
Their great and deathless spirits for her to take,  
    Made deathless for her sake,—

Rendering her rose-like in the midst of free  
                     Girdle of circling sea  
 And ever sweet and gracious with perfume  
                     From their own souls' white bloom  
 And glorious with the mastery of their might  
                     And with their beauty bright  
 And lifted by their force to lands afar  
                     Untrodden of sun or star  
 Whose sacred fields alone have yet been trod  
                     By imminent live God  
 Where they in lordly triumph and high state  
                     For new dead singers wait  
 When these too pass and leave their country higher  
                     For all their love and fire,  
 Mingling with many a mighty poet dead  
                     And lordly vanished head  
 Till all the mighty choir one day complete  
                     In deathless chorus sweet  
 Makes song more wave-like, England, then for thee  
                     Even than thy choir-like sea.

*AN INVOCATION.*

## I.

Have the roses died completely,—are the voices silent quite  
That led Keats along the highway towards the heaven's far  
    starry light ?  
Are there glimpses left no longer 'mid the waves of bosoms  
    white ?

## II.

May a poet sing no longer as that Grecian singer sung,  
Keats,—whose brow was ever laurelled as his soul was ever  
    young ;  
Keats,—who all his heart impassioned towards the dead  
    sweet legends flung !

## III.

Am I cursed and held a Pagan when I tread the self-same  
road

Where that singer's genial fancy flamed and thrilled and  
throbbed and flowed,

Burned and leaped up heavenward ever, sighed in music  
soft and glowed ?

## IV.

Is there room for me too, singing in this weary latter day  
Of the flowers that Greece saw budding on so many a  
vernal spray,—

Singing of the morning rose-flush though the skies around  
be grey ?

## V.

Hath she vanished,—she who held him to her bosom sweet  
and warm ;

Shielded Keats in bower sequestered from the harsh  
world's hail-winged storm ;  
Stood before him, white and awful, an inviolate goddess-  
form ?

VI.

Are not fields as green as ever and the morning airs as sweet  
And our waves as blue as waters that laughed round her  
shell-white feet  
When she sprang from foam untrodden and a world made  
haste to greet ?

VII.

Is not love as tender ever,—are not passion's plumes the  
same ?  
Dyed as ever in their golden mystic olden fragrant flame :  
Were the hills more radiant, think you, when their queen  
and goddess came ?

## VIII.

Is not woman e'en diviner than her handmaids were of old ?  
If their locks were splendid raven, lo ! our women plait  
their gold  
Sun-bright tresses gleaming round them, fold on tortuous  
heavy fold.

## IX.

Bosoms have they sweet as roses : were the Grecian girls  
more fair ?  
Were their cheeks as vermeil-tinctured, flushed as ours with  
salt sea-air ?  
Did they round them for a garment all the sea's wild fresh-  
ness wear ?

## X.

Surely there are handmaids for thee ! singers too, if un-  
afraid

We may sing thee and may love thee, not by cares of life  
downweighed,  
Seeking towards thine altar gleaming through the sacred  
leafy shade.

## XI.

Pour thine help and love upon us ; as to Keats thou didst  
disclose  
All thine hidden beauty blushing like a sudden-opened rose  
When against the fierce-eyed sunlight it responsive laughs  
and glows :—

## XII.

As to him thou wast for ever new-born, freaked with dainty  
foam,  
So for us be maiden-comely, and thy maiden tresses comb  
On our shores, and make our forests thy tree-pillared end-  
less home.





*LOVE-BLOOM: THIRTY SONNETS.*



## I.

## A SAINT-FLOWER,

Because thou art a saint, and clothed in white,  
 Thou art to me the sweetest of all flowers,  
 And far more fragrant are thy beauty's bowers  
 Than those that flaunt their bloom to daily sight.  
 Love is a small thing, when the love is light,—  
 But the great love that mocketh mortal hours  
 And tides of woe and sorrow's thunder-showers,  
 Endures beyond earth's day, beyond death's night.

Because thou art a saint, thou art a flower,  
 And thou art woman in that thou art saint,  
 And angel in thy womanhood's pure power,  
 Lily and rose, rich yet most free from taint ;  
 Because thou art so pure, lo ! love's mouth saith,  
 " Thou art more dainty than a rose's breath ! "

## II.

## THY YOUNG BEAUTY.

Didst thou, sweet, wait for me when thou wast young?

Yea, have we yearned across the bitter seas,

Heart wailing out to heart,—and hath the breeze

Of summer round two souls expectant sung?

Have the pale past years with one weary tongue

Cried out for soul-companionship? the trees

Waved with forlorn grey frondage o'er waste leas,

And through the stars one hopeless music rung?

And, now we find each other, we are barred,—

Barred from each other, though the sad souls cry

“ At length, at length, a recompense is nigh,

At length we rest victorious ; ” weird and hard

Seems to our souls the iron hand of Fate,

Denying love's bliss at love's very gate.

III.

THE EARLY WOODS.

Oh, sweetheart, had I known thee in those days !

How sweet thine eyes were in the early air

Of life when all fair things are yet more fair ;

How softly thou didst thread the forest-ways !

The breeze of morning wantoned with thy hair

As thou didst wander through the wooded hollow :

Oh, had mine eager heart been there to follow,

What fruit of joy life might have had to bear !

'Tis late to meet when the chill woods are grey,

No longer rose-flushed with the dawn of day

And beautiful with bloom of early dreams ;

The rose is not so red, the lily shines

Less white, less fragrant are the forest-pines,

And hushed is half the laughter of the streams !

## IV.

## IF.

If we could give each other what we saw—

The spirit of gladness of the early hours,

The spirit of sweetness in the long-lost flowers,

And all the deep divine sea's sense of awe,

And young divine hearts free from stain or flaw,

And all youth's sacred and unsullied powers,—

If we could see once more the green sweet bowers,

Freed from all pangs of later life that gnaw,—

If once for us again the waves could gleam

As blue and tender as in love's first dream,

And once again the sunset flame as grand

As o'er the mountains of the long-lost land,

How would our souls that grow forlorn and old

Take from the rapture a diviner mould !

V.

"I WAITED FOR THEE."

I waited for thee : ever did I wait.

No music sounded through the shades of night

Or when the moon upon the waves was bright

Or when the sun swept through the morning's gate

Or when the innumerable breakers white

Flung at the scowling clouds their angry hate,—

But, maddened by the loneliness of fate,

I yearned towards thee as towards my soul's own light.

I knew thee not,—but music spake of thee

And of the sacred beauty of thy breast,

And all the voices of the mournful sea

Said, "Here is peace for ever, here is rest ;

Thou shalt outstrip the foot of pain when She

Crowneth and endeth thy life's fevered quest."



## VI.

## THE MOUNTAINS AND THE SEA.

We strive together the far heights to reach.

    The longing for the mountains and the sea

    Doth ever, sweetheart, overshadow thee ;

Ever their music ringeth through my speech.

Ours is the rapture of the lonely beach

    When the white breakers surge tumultuously,

    And ours the glory of the pine-clad lea ;

The mountains and the ocean chant to each.

Thou art the mountain-air : I am the sea :

    Thou bringest me the breath of all thy pines

And all thy blossoms' beauty and their glee

    And all the glory of fern-draped inclines

And all thy white-plumed streams :—I give to thee

    My sea-song, born where the grey water shines.

VII.

OUR SELF-EXISTENCE.

Through pain we reach a lonely region fair  
    With the immortal mountain-winds of God,  
    A wondrous, weird, and an untravelled sod,  
Thrilled by the high song of the mountain-air.  
The altar of our faithful love is there  
    On the sheer hillside trackless and untrod ;  
    By power of earnest endless passion shod  
Our feet have climbed the rocks and glaciers bare.

And now we stand together on the height  
    And sweeter than the singing of the vale  
Is this my harp-string that the keen airs smite,  
    And sweeter art thou, rose, though thou art pale  
Than all the blossoms spread for love's delight  
    Where through green meads the dull-winged zephyrs sail.

## VIII.

## "IS IT NOT WONDERFUL?"

Is it not wonderful that when we meet  
The whole surrounding world-scene fades away !  
We are sufficient each to each : we say,  
"Now do the weary rest,—and rest is sweet."  
Thou hast the tenderness of Christ-like feet  
That flush with rose the worldly waters grey ;  
And I ? God gives me manhood to convey  
To thy time-frozen heart new vital heat.

So like two gods we blend our souls in one,  
Lords of all seasons, kings of the wide land,  
A queen and king with wedded hand in hand,—  
Gazing triumphant at our long work done,  
And fearless at the leagues that yet expand  
Between us and the setting of the sun.

IX.

"THOU ART SO GREAT,"

Thou art so great in spirit and yet so sweet  
In spirit that whoso lists to sing of thee  
Must mix his song with the sweet singing sea  
That surges ever adoring round thy feet,  
And with the passion of the winds that beat  
Upon the rocky echoing mountain-sides :  
Oh, thou art not possessed like common brides  
Whose hearts at love's tumultuous tides retreat !

Nay ! thou art as the spirit of the storm,  
Sublime yet fragrant, wonderful yet warm,  
Gentle yet terrible, most sweet yet great,  
Dainty and white as half unfolded flower  
Yet full of fire and force and life and power,  
A flame-fledged eagle, and an eagle's mate.

## X.

## LIGHT LOVE.

“The author of these Sonnets, styling himself Proteus, acknowledges thereby a natural mood of change. He here lays bare what was once his heart, to the public, but what for good or evil is his heart no longer. He stands upon the threshold of middle life, and already his dreams are changed. The gods of his youth have ceased to be his gods.”—*Preface to “The Love Sonnets of Proteus”.*

There are whose loves are new with every morn :

Who wear love like a robe,—then cast away,

Deeming eternal love a thing to scorn

And passion a bright bird who will not stay

With mortals ever, or his wings delay :—

The sorrow of such upon the breeze is borne

A sobbing tuneless note, a wail forlorn,

That mixes with the wild wind's plumage grey.

But we, great spirit, are we such as these ?

Nay, round us breathes the promise of soft spring ;

Ripples an endless laughter through the trees ;

The blue streams as with God's own joyance sing ;

Life is the bird that dwells with us nor flees,

And death's the dark-hued fast-receding wing.

XI.

THE UNION IN NATURE AND IN MUSIC.

Thine own soul is of Nature's realm a part,  
And so we meet within that wide domain :  
Our lips touch in the ripples of the rain,  
Ocean's is our own ever-beating heart.  
Thou crownest me with love,—I with mine Art  
Crown thee, and with the music of my strain,  
And with my inmost soul's thorn-crown of pain,  
And with the dreams that through my spirit dart.

Beneath the sacred stars our spirits meet  
In union wonderful and calm and sweet ;  
But most of all when music floods the place  
With its strange amorous rapture passing fair,  
I feel the touch upon me of thine hair,  
And sink into thy soul's superb embrace.

## XII.

## THY SOUL.

Thou hast no weakness of the common soul  
    Within thee : thou hast breathed the mountain-air  
    Of God, and found the angels' singing fair,  
And heard the eternal tides that surge and roll  
Upon the heavenly shores :—thou dost control  
    With will indomitable thine own rare  
    Most fiery spirit, and dost the yearning share  
Of those who pant but for the proudest goal.

Thou art a woman-flame : thou would'st consume  
    With thine own fervour smaller souls if these  
    Beheld thee as thou art ; but swathed in ease  
And wrapped in fragrant mists of valley-bloom  
    Such apprehend not ever what thou art,  
    Nor fathom the hill-grandeur of thine heart.

XIII.

AND YET.

And yet thou art a woman very sweet :

A woman-spirit with a woman's face,

Beautiful, tender, gentle, full of grace,

With heart that doth for woman's rapture beat.

Thou hast climbed the mountains with no sluggish feet,—

Yet art thou happy in a green still place

By quiet pools o'er which the swallows race,

Resting awhile from aspiration's heat.

Because thou art so great, thou art most fair,

And highest spirit because softest rose,

And softest rose because the mountain-air

Bracing and gracing round about thee blows,

And gentlest woman because clear and rare

And swift and splendid God's thought through thee flows.



## XIV.

“DOST THOU CONTEMN ME?”

Dost thou contemn me in that I am red?

The stains of battle are upon my limbs

And with the strenuous war-cry my brain swims;

I am not fit for bower or lady's bed.

The sword-blades seem to circle round my head

E'en now in thought, and dust mine eyesight dims;

Am I a man for love or marriage-hymns,—

To whom a rose as thou art should be wed?

Thou art red too, but red as is a rose

Of perfect petals: I am flawed and marred

And weary and grim and battle-streaked and scarred,—

My head-piece has the dints of ceaseless blows,

And I have ridden for years with visor barred;

Are mine arms where a woman should repose?



XV.

CAN I BE SILENT ?

Nay ! can my voice be silent when my heart  
 Is never silent ? Can my lyre be dead  
 When every morn the fresh sun's tuneful head  
 Glitters anew across wide fields of Art ?  
 Words cannot tell the whole,—but they tell part ;  
 Not in a sonnet, love, thy lips are red,  
 And not in verse our spirit-hands are wed,  
 But yet through verse soft thoughts and gracious dart.

Sing, love, I *must* : I cannot hush my lyre  
 Or still the music-yearning that thy face,  
 Thy soul, thy wit, thy beauty, do inspire ;  
 Along the song-course still my feet must race,  
 For easier could the sun forsake the sea  
 Than I could fail, sweetheart, to sing of thee !

## XVI.

"RAPTURE *IS* HOLINESS."

Rapture *is* holiness : God's lips are near,  
    O tender woman, when thy lips are close  
And when thy sweet voice ringeth in mine ear,—  
    And when I touch thy bosom's soft white rose  
    Mine heart the eternal Mother-Spirit knows,  
And when thy beauty bathes my soul in bliss  
    It seems to me that through my spirit goes  
The thrill of God's ineffable pure kiss :  
Yea, having thee most surely I have this,—  
    And, holding thee, the heavenly land I hold  
And hear the heavenly harps and cadences  
    Of sweet immortal song, and joy untold  
Burns through me like a fiery river deep  
When in thine arms, like Love's own arms, I sleep.

XVII.

AN ENGLISH FLOWER.

An English flower thou art and English scenes  
Have given thee half thy beauty, and thy face  
From the wind's mouth that o'er our mountains leans  
Hath gathered half its bright and wholesome grace ;  
Our rose and lily in lips and cheeks I trace ;  
And all the splendour of untrammelled seas  
Hath passed into thy spirit,—and thine embrace  
Is like the English sweet-limbed June-breathed breeze  
That clings around the clover-scented leas,  
Copious and gracious,—and thy heart is high  
And pure and wide and fearless, and thy knees  
Have never bent save under God's own sky :  
Nor priest can tame nor frail creed fetter thee,  
For thou art daughter of the untamed sea.

## XVIII.

## BREEZE, MOON, AND SUN.

Thou art equal with me,—lo ! thou art the breeze  
    That passes sighing o'er the water-way,  
And I am the wild song within the seas  
    Driving up toward thee the sonorous spray  
    And glimmering sheet on sheet of sea-shine grey ;  
Thou art the moon above the tides at night  
    Glittering above them with most tender ray,  
And I laugh underneath thy magic light  
And clothe myself with limitless loud might  
    Of song : thou art the sun,—my free waves follow  
Thine all-alluring splendour calm and bright,  
    Rising and falling fast in height and hollow ;  
Thou art breeze, moon, and sun,—and I the sea,  
Swayed by the rapture, chainless soul, of thee !

XIX.

ALONE.

On lovers loving in the silent night  
The holy spirit of spotless God descends  
And with their souls magnificently blends,  
Till as their lips touch lo ! their souls are white,  
And as their eyes meet lo ! those eyes are bright  
With the eternal power God's spirit sends :  
Far off from home, apart from fame or friends,  
They rest in God's unutterable light.

O love, we were unspeakably alone  
With Love and God : thou wast alone with me,  
And I with God and his most silver tone,  
And thou with God, and I alone with thee,—  
And both of us alone,—our faces blown  
By the great wind of greeting from the sea.

## XX.

## JOINED SPIRITS.

No more as separate souls we move along,—  
The work of blending is divinely done ;  
From now till setting of our earthly sun  
Joined are our voices in one wedding-song.  
Thou art to me my whiteness,—I thy strong  
Singer through whom thy laurel-wreath is won ;  
By thee my robe of victory is spun,  
And mine are the swift thoughts that round thee throng.

Never, though all the ages stormed foam-white  
Upon our path, should they the souls divide :  
Through all eternity thou art my Bride  
And I thy stronghold,—thou my soft delight,—  
I am thine armour and thou art my shield ;  
Even so we traverse the hard-foughten field.

XXI.

IF THOU WERT DEAD !

If thou wert dead, O love,—if thou wert dead,—  
    How could one summer sunset dare to gleam  
    Above the ripples of the rosied stream ?  
How could one rose blush into mocking red ?  
If death's wreath whitened round thy dear dark head  
    I feel that I could never sing again :  
    For thou art as the fountain of my strain,  
Whence buoyant waters towards the plains are led.

If thou wert gone, O love,—if thou wert gone,—  
How could the thoughtless heartless sun shine on !  
How could the same chant fill the sea's dull soul  
And thy same crested waves without thee roll !  
How could thy singer lift from earth his head,  
If thou wert dead,—O love, if thou wert dead !



## XXII.

## DEATH AND FREEDOM.

But ought I so to sorrow? How thy chains  
At the death-angel's touch would fall away!  
How for thee flame would flush life's waters grey!  
How death, though life's hand lingers and refrains,  
Would crash along thy fetters! how new plains  
'Of life in the first light of heaven's clear day  
Would open out before thee; the long fray  
Would then be over,—washed away its stains!

Death's hand to thee will be the hand of love  
Destroying every bolt and every chain;  
Bursting the prison of thy life-long pain;  
Descending wave-resistless from above:  
Love's hand, God's voice saying, "Lo, thou art free!  
Thou hast conquered self;—rejoice: thou art the sea!"

/

XXIII.

OUR SHIELD.

We give to others,—give them day by day  
Of our hearts' best : we strengthen and make whole :—  
We soothe the sorrows of the weary soul ;  
We pour our spirits in eager help away.  
But for the strength our stronger souls convey  
To theirs, what do they bring ? what glad return  
Of strength is given us when our own hearts burn,—  
When we lie sleepless till the morning grey ?

If we shield others, God behind us stands,  
A strength perpetual, a surpassing power,  
And guards us with invincible great hands  
And hides us in his inmost holiest bower  
And gives us for our fellows' sympathy  
The kiss of sunlight and caress of sea.

## XXIV.

## LOVE'S LAND.

How old and weary are we till we meet !

Then love with laughter and with joyous speech

Gathers the boyish pebbles on the beach

And every primrose is past praising sweet.

What soft airs gladden us,—what swift thoughts beat

Along our hearts that were so faint and sore ;

And now we hear the old waves' mellow roar

And tread beside them with fresh vigorous feet.

So sweet it was ! the night fell round our eyes

With tenderest touching, as of woman's hand,

And folded us in depths of dark-blue skies,

And the dear waves plashed softly on the strand,

And dreamy words passed into dreamier sighs,

And only sweetest love possessed the land.

## XXV.

## THE PROMISE OF SPRING.

When spring's hand wakes the meadows and the plains,  
And the bright cowslips in the wet low fields  
Spread o'er the grass their fragrant yellow shields,  
And the gay daffodils repay the rains,  
And fern-fronds cluster in the high-banked lanes,  
And the moist wood the countless primrose yields,  
And the sun's hand a heavier sceptre wields,  
And the bright sky a clearer love-flush gains :—  
Then, love, we too the promise of the air  
Partake : we know that for our souls as well  
Breathes forth in heaven the spring-tide, and the smell  
Of violets, and that one day, calm and fair  
Will burst upon us God's immortal sky  
Beneath whose rays no soul-flowers ever die.

## XXVI.

## THE GLORY OF SUMMER.

The glory of summer with its banks of rose  
And fields of blossoms, and its moonlit night  
Flooded with marvellous entrancing light,  
And dewy plains wherever love's foot goes,  
Is as our sacred love wherethrough there glows  
Passion, divine, and limitlessly bright,  
And tender, and rose-soft, and lily-white,—  
The glory of love our wedded spirit knows.

In all the life of summer we are one :  
One in its splendour and triumphant power ;  
One with its every star and leaf and flower  
And moon and wave and cloudless heaven and sun ;  
One with it in its most luxuriant hour,  
And in its sorrow,—when its life is done.

XXVII.

THE CALM OF AUTUMN.

Then autumn comes,—and the wild woods retain,  
    Sighing, their golden splendour for awhile,  
    Maddened at heart for lack of summer's smile  
And all the reckless glory of her reign.  
Calm settles down o'er valley, hill, and plain,  
    And quiet meadow and red-leafed defile,—  
    And fair blue glimpses in the skies beguile,  
Nor yet the first frost stiffens in the lane.

The calm of autumn round our brows we bind,  
    Love, for a circlet : not the summer day  
    Brought more of peace than this sky cold and grey  
And this still whispering faint unfiery wind,  
    And, in the West, the sunset's tender rose,  
    Wherethrough the soul of all past passion glows.

## XXVIII.

## THE REST OF WINTER.

And then comes perfect peace : the leaves are dead  
And not one trace of summer lingers now  
Within the woods ; yet summer 'round our brow  
Its own eternal coronet hath shed,  
And we are summer-souled, and crowned with red  
Blossoms that never for the winter bow  
Fear-darkened petals or subservient head,  
Or even the stress of autumn mists allow.

Spring we have had, and summer, and the gay  
Death-gilded foliage of the autumn day,  
And winter now with snows about us stands ;  
But, dying into life, we heed him not,  
For in our spirits great gold June-suns hot  
Exult with great exuberant deathless hands.

XXIX.

THE SEA-SANDS' GOLD.

How *can* I cease to sing? thou art not soon  
     Exhausted, fathomed, done with—like a girl  
     Who claims one sonnet on a golden curl,  
 And that's the scope and end of passion's tune!  
 Thou art as endless as the endless moon  
     That broods above the waters as they swirl,  
     Not twice the same,—now white, now silver-pearl,  
 Now golden-red : thou art my boundless June !

Thou art my love, my summer, my delight ;  
     If to the end of time my spirit sang,  
 Yea, chanted upward to the August night,  
     And if round listening stars my harp-string rang,  
 One half of all my love would not be told,—  
 For it is countless as the sea-sands' gold !



## XXX.

## MEASURELESS.

For thou art measureless as are the seas :

Thy soul is as the solemn waters grey

When ships traverse their spaces day by day

And mark their colour deepen with the breeze.

Blue now they are, afar from rocks and trees ;

So thou art boundless, and thy spirit partakes

The silent force of silent mountain-lakes,

And all the passionate unrest of these.

When the storm strikes thee lo ! thou art divine !

Thy waves climb upward, seeking the dark sky,

And I stoop downward, yearning to be thine,

And rustle with my soul through mountain-pine,

Or in the depth of thy blue shadows lie

Cloudlike, till all thy moans are one with mine !

*A REPUBLICAN PRINCESS; OR, THE DEATH  
OF MESENTZOFF.*

“Oh, am I not as white and soft and sweet  
As any blood-royal princess of them all?  
Yea, whiter, softer, sweeter!—in that I  
Hold, fragrant now within my woman’s flesh,  
The flowers of all the years that are to be:  
In that the fair Republic’s future bliss  
Shines now within me,—in that every rose,  
Each lily, of the future, in my lips  
Or on my hands is snow-white or is red;

This very measureless and soft desire  
Wherewith I cleave to thee, O love, to-night  
Is but the immeasurable and vital flame  
That burns deep in the deep Republic's heart.  
*I am the white Republic:* and I give  
In woman's burning yielding snow-white flesh  
The splendour of its future unto thee.  
It is incarnate in my body and soul,  
The body and fervent soul wherewith I clasp  
Thy body and thy lustrous spirit to-night.  
Oh kiss me the Republic: cling to me  
The tender pure Republic lying here  
Naked and limitless beneath thy gaze.  
Because in me the agony and the tears  
Of all who yet have suffered for the sake  
Of Freedom and of Love are gathered up:  
Because in my one spirit I can include  
The sorrow of the past and every pang  
Of patriot stricken upon the battle-field  
Or patriot-woman stricken as deep at home,

God grants me as reward the power to give  
To thee the sweet Republic's soul to-night.  
O lover, take it,—take me : taking me,  
Take the Republic warm within thy arms.

“ Lo ! there is yet a blood-spot on thine arm !  
See now I kiss it ; damp it is e'en now,  
So hasty and so rapid was thy flight !  
I tinge my lips with this the recreant blood  
Of executed Mesentzoff, and then  
I kiss the disc of crimson back to thee  
My lover, so—and so ; art thou content ?  
Art thou content that Freedom's spotless God,  
Having rescued thee the executioner,  
The carrier-out on traitor Mesentzoff  
Of holy Freedom's passionate decree,—  
Having delivered by his arm of might  
Thy soul from the pursuers, now hath given  
One woman's blossom of unmeasured praise

To thee the blood-stained doer of the deed ?  
Art thou content ? Oh how I love thee, sweet,  
Now that thou art not white but stained and red !  
Yea, be thou red,—for ever red : and *I*  
Will be thy whiteness, thine unstained pure flesh,  
Thy spotless body, when before the throne  
Of God we answer for to-day's high deed.  
And Mesentzoff ; where is his spirit now ?  
Dead with the dead souls ; crowned amid the kings  
Whose burning restless treacherous strange eyes  
Are the eternal torches that illumine  
Their own eternal torments in the hell  
Whereto betrayers of their country plunge  
When at the dagger's mandate (as to-day  
The sacred dagger spoke !) the wide earth gapes,  
Laughing, to let them through ; and down they speed  
With groans of women tortured and of men  
Downtrodden, for their clamorous charioteers.

“There’s Mesentzoff!—and, sweetheart, where are we?  
In imminent danger of our lives—but yet  
In heaven : in the thick of Paradise,  
Right in its very central sweetest bower :  
Husband and wife beneath the smile of God.  
That blood-spot is our ruby wedding-ring,  
And the pursuers are the priests who clinch  
The august and swift, impetuous ceremony.  
A murderer they’ll call thee ; even now  
I seem in thought (or is it in very deed ?)  
To hear their hoarse and sanguine-throated shouts :  
Murderer, I kiss thee ; kiss me, murderer,—  
And mingle souls thus through the fierce close lips !

“Make much of me : the morning over-soon  
Will come,—the grey and lurid morn of doom  
Perhaps ; Oh make the most of me to-night !  
I give thee all I promised,—do I not ?  
Am I not true ? Am I not faithful wife ?

Am I not pure and faithful helpmate, dear,  
Giving thee all the chaste fit fruit of love ?  
Oh I am but a woman after all,  
And I would live,—yea I would live with thee  
In some sweet island in the sunny West  
Or in the sunnier East ; I would not die.  
I would bear children unto thee, my love,  
Would know the rapture of a quiet home,  
The tender pure divine domestic joys  
That other women know, and then despise,  
Heed not, contemn, think little of ; oh ne'er  
Before this, did I dream how sweet a thing  
Might love in all its simple issues be !  
Love I despised ; or held it as a crown  
That only in the life beyond the grave  
Should be upon my patient forehead worn.  
But now I love love : thou hast taught me this ;  
Love on for ever ! let our joy prevail  
Through sunrise and throughout another day  
And night, and through the sweet eternity.

O love, man, hero,—would that in the world,  
Yea, in the starry universe of God,  
There were no other blossom than thy mouth,  
And that for ever I might gather that,  
And fill my soul for ever with the bloom  
And passionate fragrance of that endless flower.

“ Ah, I am tender with thee now, and with  
Myself: I would not die, I would escape,  
Fly with thee somewhere ; be thy happy bride.  
Can we not shun pursuit, and ere the morn  
Be far upon some sweet untrodden way,  
Some road to France or England, happier lands  
Where Freedom needs not, as in this our home,  
To sit with armèd hands and watchful head ?  
Yet—I would stay with thee for ever here,  
Live here, die here ; pass from our glory here  
To Paradise ; I know not what I wish,—  
I only know that perfect love is sweet,



And that thou art my perfect flower of joy,  
My king, my gold-haired lover,—my delight.

“ Play with my hair : it is a girl’s for thee,  
Untouched, unhandled,—as my body was  
For thee a maiden’s two short hours ago ;  
Is now a woman’s and a wife’s indeed.  
Cling close,—I’ll be thy mother now, and hold  
Thee the boy-murderer in my safe strong arms,  
Empty too long of any gift to hold.  
Hector-Andromache I’ll be to thee !  
Sweet mother, sister, father, all in one,  
And wife as well,—and even more than wife ;  
I’ll be to thee the sweet Republic-Bride,  
The chainless advent of the kiss of God.  
Ah ! weary hath my life been ; never yet  
Have I beheld a flower of love to press  
Close to my bosom thus ; now thee I press  
Close, close, and kiss thee with the fervour poured

Into my lips by lonely life-long pain.  
Thou hast done thy deed ; and I, I do my deed,  
Fulfil my promise : virgin, holy, white,  
I give myself, a flower of fire, to thee.  
Our strong Republic's gathered ardour now  
Burns through my veins : I am no more a girl,  
Woman no more, a human being no more,  
But one wild measureless surpassing flame,  
A princess of the royal blood of God.  
And as that princess I reward thee, sweet,  
Falling from heaven like some superb white star  
To crown thy crime, thy murder : thy divine  
Dagger that smote the tyrant to the dust.  
Bring near that dagger—we may need it yet—  
Yes, place it underneath the pillow,—so,—  
Nay, let me kiss it first : now place it there.  
Who knows ? we too may need it ere the morn !  
Now turn so,—turn half-round ; a mother must  
Make her child comfortable in his sleep.

“ Sleep shall we ? or shall we watch out the night ?  
Or wilt thou sleep, and shall I, star-like, watch ?  
Or wilt thou be the star, with that gold hair,  
And shall I be the night with deep black locks  
Shrouding the star in soft sweet blackness poured  
About it ? or shall we like children sleep  
One short glad sleep,—then face what fate may bring ?  
Ah ! let us both sleep : let me, wife for once,  
Sleep on God’s earth one simple wedded sleep,  
And in thine husbandly protecting arms  
Forget e’en the Republic for awhile.

“ How long have we slept ? See the light begins  
To glimmer at the dawning window-pane !  
Now once again we are Republicans ;  
The crimson morning is our blood-red sash ;  
Love, let us twine the dawn across our breasts,  
And fearless face the morrow : Oh, I am proud,  
Proud, eager, dauntless, shameless, womanly,

More sweetly virginal than ever yet  
In all my maiden-lifetime I have been.  
Shall women cry ‘Shame on me’?—I will cry  
‘Foul shame on them who in their ignorance  
Have known not love or freedom’; yea, I’ll face  
The angels seeking flowers wherewith to adorn  
God’s heavenly dwelling-house, and I will fling  
Towards them my ringless and unwedded hand,  
Crying ‘Here is a lily,—take it : you  
Will find no lily in the fields of God  
Sweeter, no blossom purer : bear it up  
And let God smiling wear it next his heart’.

“Now ere the dawn is on us kiss once more :  
One last embrace,—oh am I not a queen,  
The queen of Russia and the queen of heaven  
And queen of the Republic—and of love ?  
Cannot a queen kiss ? Are my lips not royal ?  
Oh fear me not, shrink not, but let me pass

Like some swift fire across thy lips and face,  
Burning them into death, and into life  
Beyond all death, and all that death can do.  
Oh, but a few short wondrous hours ago  
Thou wast in flight, pursued by vengeful men,  
The natural avengers of thy deed,  
Whom we can pity, whom we do not blame,—  
They know not what they do,—but now thou art  
Warm, safe, impalaced in a woman's arms.  
Like all God's contrasts, sudden and divine  
The breathless marvellous change is ; swift as if  
Upon some bitter bleak December day,  
With white snow beating at the frozen roofs,  
Sweet summer and the scent of roses came  
In at the window suddenly,—and the sun  
Flamed suddenly as in August,—and the sky  
Gleamed suddenly as in June, one sheet of blue.  
I am thy sun, thy summer, thy blue sky,  
Thy fragrant tender rose : God gives in me  
The first divine most excellent soft glimpse

Of heavenly summer, and of heavenly flowers.  
Love, taste my lips,—is that a royal kiss,  
And that, and that, and that ; am I not sweet ?  
Am I not sweet for thee ? pleasant to thee ?  
Am I not sweet to sight and touch and taste,  
Soft to thine handling, tender to thy grasp,—  
Am I not sweet all over—just one bed  
Of summer-sown intoxicating flowers ?  
See how I humble and abase myself  
Just out of very royal utter love,  
Because thou art so noble, and a king,  
A murderer and a republican,  
Making myself a captive unto thee,  
A slave, whom thou may'st do with as thou wilt,  
Use as thou wilt,—and yet a royal queen,  
Royal and republican, and all divine,  
Free even in the midst of thine embrace.

•

“And now the last kiss : dost thou love me, love ?  
Am not I splendid ? Am I not pure white,  
Unflecked, unflawed,—marble from head to foot ?  
I am, thou sayest ; and since thou art so red,  
Red with that bright deed, *thou* art pure white too,  
Equal with me, my partner and my crown.  
Oh, one white splendid yearning trembling dear  
Delicious delicate untouched divine  
Most amorous fervid pure impassioned flower,  
I cast myself with all my fiery hair,  
Soft, terrible, upon thee,—and I show  
In these my lips that burn thy pale lips through  
The power of the Republic, who deposes  
Me, me, its sacred woman-messenger  
To kiss the approval of to-day’s bold deed  
Into thy very spirit, and to show  
How after death comes life, and after life ”—

[*Voices are heard outside.*

“The murderer of Mesentzoff is here.”

[*She gives him the dagger, first kissing it gently.*

“ Kill me and kill thyself : 'tis better so.”

*[The police break into the apartment.*

“ Both dead ! Both gone with Mesentzoff to-day  
Along the same cold road !

See how she clings  
E'en in her death, bride-like, about his neck  
And how her black hair covers all his face.  
Leave them and send for women : little enough  
These murderer-lover mad Republicans  
Have left for us, the avenging hands, to do.”

*Dec. 16, 1878.*



*THE PRIEST AND HIS WIFE.*

A DRAMATIC LYRIC.

The priest is dull ; his thought is lame :  
 But is the priest's wife quite the same ?  
*Hath her warm heart no thoughts of flame ?*

The priest hath barren lips and thin :  
 But are there not full lips to win ?  
*And is the touching them a sin ?*

The priest hath sleek black shiny vest :  
*Who hath the yearning uncaressed*  
*White fragrant splendid fluttering breast ?*

The priest speaks weary words by day :  
*But are there not soft words to say*  
*To some one in the twilight grey ?*

How long his sermon is and cold !  
How sweet her glance half-shy, half-bold !  
*And ah ! the sun on locks of gold !*

His room is full of parchments dry !  
*But is there not a chamber nigh*  
*Where laughing Love heard lovers sigh ?*

O fool,—and wilt thou quit the place  
Because the preacher's soul lacks grace !  
*Behind him shines another face !*

No preacher ever slew the stars !  
They beam behind his prison-bars !  
Gold Venus ! Laughing bright-locked Mars !

The priest is dull ; his thought is slow :  
But is the priest's wife even so ?  
*The stars and flowers of last night know !*

*ANOTHER ALICE.*

## I.

Crowned not with sea-shine fair,  
But with dim London air,  
Another laughing Alice holds my hand :  
Her eyes are gentle brown  
And velvet-black locks crown  
Her brow, waved gently band above black band.

## II.

Not by the old sweet sea  
Her bright glance pierces me,

But in the midst of grey and wintry gloom :  
In London fog and smoke,  
Not 'mid green birch and oak  
And all the uncounted miles of heather-bloom.

## III.

Not underneath the moon  
Where first love's gentle swoon  
Of quiet wonder on two lovers fell ;  
Not in the old sweet land  
Where shone thy whiter hand  
O Alice of the passion-haunted dell ;

## IV.

Not 'mid the golden corn  
Where first love's bliss was born ;  
Not by the green deep cliff-side or the sea ;

Not on the purple moors  
Where the high air allures ;  
Not by the berried mountain-ash are we,

V.

O Alice of the town,  
With deep-black locks for crown,  
And eyes whose lustre not the sea could make  
Sweeter,—and breast as white  
As foam that through the old night  
Upon the old glimmering marvellous beach did break.

VI.

Not in the love-sweet dell  
Where love's first whisper fell,  
Not 'mid the old rush of passion like the sea,  
10


Do, now, our spirits stand,  
But in a later land  
Shadowed by many a gold-red autumn tree.

## VII.

For life has on its way  
Surged twelve years since the day  
When all the spring-like passionate fields were green  
Around the treading light  
Of her who shone with bright  
Swift beauty amid those meads a very queen.

## VIII.

And now, i' the later day,  
I gather from life's spray  
Thy tender beauty, and thy kiss is sweet



And soft and warm and close  
Though town-wind round us blows  
And not the breeze that stirs the impulsive wheat.

IX.

Oh ! take me by the hand  
And lead me to love's land  
Though love seem far off in the weary town ;  
Show me that love is fair  
Not only in mountain-air,  
Not only amid the breeze from thymy down ;

X.

Show me that thou art white  
As Alice lost to sight,  
O Alice unveiled where no flowers adore



Thy beauty,—but I alone  
Mark magic in thy tone,  
While past the window London's wild wheels roar.

## XI.

Teach me that thou art sweet  
Though no glad August heat  
Flames round about us, but a wintry day  
Is desolate without  
And all the rabble-rout  
Of grim town-toilers scurry upon their way.

## XII.

Inspire me with thy face,  
For never in any place  
Where woman's beauty shines are flowers forlorn,

Or grasses destitute,  
Or the stars' music mute,  
Or barred the impassioned gateways of the morn.

XIII.

Thy satin-black pure hair  
Upon thy neck is fair  
Though mountain-wind caresses not its folds,  
And all the summer sea  
Shines in the eyes of thee,  
And flowers thine hand, though empty of blossoms, holds;

XIV.

For never yet the hand  
Of woman, passion-planned,  
Lacked blossomy balm of touch, and tender grace

Of flowers from all the South  
Is fervid on her mouth,  
And flush of more than rose is on her face.

## XV.

So cover thou, sweet, me  
With rapture of the sea  
And glory of the summer and with grand  
Immeasurable delight  
As of the August night  
By star-like air-soft touching of thine hand !

## XVI.

Thy name hath music's might  
And all the old delight  
Leaps burning, thrilling, through me at the sound :

Again I seem to be  
By the old silver sea,  
By the old moon's soft embosoming light enwound.

XVII.

Again the clear waves shine  
In far fierce foam-edged line ;  
Their old impetuous music shakes the shore ;  
The earlier Alice stands  
Light-footed on the sands,—  
Her tender splendour thrills me as of yore.

XVIII.

The clover-fields are sweet  
With passage of her feet,  
And all my soul is gladdened at her touch :


O Alice of to-day  
Who dost this gift convey,  
If but for this, I have to thank thee much !

## XIX.

Because thou hast the name  
That once was God's own flame  
To lead me up the mountain-land, and be  
My talisman of might ;  
Because thy breast is white,—  
Yea, white as foam that lined our foam-sweet sea :

## XX.

Because thou hast to-day  
Helped love upon love's way  
And turned love's solemn gaze past years that flee



Towards meadow-sweet as white  
As thou art, love, to-night,  
And towards the old changeless grandeur of the sea :

XXI.

Because thou hast indeed  
When flowers had run to seed  
And dreary drooped the branches of life's tree  
Become a blossom new,  
Draped tenderly with dew,  
As once a flower was dew-kissed by the sea :

XXII.

Because thou art divine,  
This wreath for thee I twine,  
Yea, lay this song at unexpectant feet ;

For surely for thy name  
At least, thou well mayest claim  
Some service of my lyre, some homage meet.

## XXIII.

So, while grim London rings  
Around us, let thy wings  
Close tenderly above me ; let us dream  
That on a summer shore  
The yellow moon-rays pour  
Their bounty and o'er the wondrous waters gleam.

## XXIV.

Never could blacker hair  
Woo tenderest summer air  
Or softer lips find mountain-kisses sweet :

If once a whiter hand  
Led wayward love to land,  
No whiter bosom ever mine did meet.

XXV.

No whiter as a flower,  
Though sweeter spirit-power  
Have others, seeing things thou dost not dream ;  
But blossom-sweet and pure  
Thou art and shalt endure  
For that, and for thy dear name's golden beam.

XXVI.

Thou hast made the London day  
Bright with the sea-shine grey,  
And splendid with a memory of a face



More beautiful than thou ;  
Yet for this gift I vow  
Thou hast for ever in my song a place !

## XXVII.

While lovers read my song,  
O brown-eyed maid, so long  
Shalt thou within their hearts and my heart be ;  
The girl whose beauty made  
Dim London like a glade  
Voluptuous with the rapture of the sea :

## XXVIII.

Whose beauty made the air  
Of even grim London fair  
And brought the sense of summer back to me

And made the dark street shine  
With line on sudden line  
Of moon-led breakers thundering in from sea :

XXIX.

Whose beauty made the street  
Smell all of meadow-sweet  
And all the pavement blossom like the lea  
Where the sea-grasses grow  
In grey-green stalwart row,  
Most amorous for the wind's kiss and the sea :

XXX.

Whose beauty made my heart  
With sudden bound and start  
Lay hold upon the old unforgotten glee

And all my spirit stand  
Where in the changeless land  
My love for ever watches the grey sea :

## XXXI.

Whose softness made the air  
With sudden joy aware  
Of subtle scents from many a summer tree ;  
Whose whiteness made May-bloom  
Flash white across the gloom,  
White as the flashing whiteness of the sea :

## XXXII.

Whose softness thrilled my soul  
And round about it stole  
Till all my being stormed forth rapturously

To seek and find and claim  
The woman with thy name,  
The other Alice,—Alice of the sea :

XXXIII.

Whose softness was a sense  
Unearthly, an intense  
New gift of living love, a golden key  
To unlock passion's land  
And place in mine the hand  
That once evaded love's hand by the sea :

XXXIV.

Whose splendour was as new  
As a spring morning's dew  
Or as the June sun's morning breath when he

Pours life upon the hills  
And all the tossing rills  
Laugh upward towards his face, as laughs the sea :

## XXXV.

Whose splendour flung a veil  
Of passion, sweet and pale,  
Around,—a tender robe of purity ;  
And made swift thoughts divine  
Along the spirit shine,  
As shine the glimmering surges of the sea :—

## XXXVI.

So, Alice, till the waves  
Roll only over graves  
Mix thy name with the name that still must be

Higher than all names,—and blend  
Till time itself doth end  
With the endless boundless passion of the sea.

*ALICE OF THE SEA.*

## I.

The windy surgy sea  
Was as the soul of thee,  
O Alice of the sea, and of the bower  
Where Love in tender light  
With face and body bright  
Shone through youth's one divine impassioned hour.

## II.

Not any dreary town  
Thou hadst, O love, for crown,—  
But all the untrodden deep impetuous waters

Urgent in gathered wrath  
Were strenuous round thy path,  
O fairest-eyed of all earth's fair-eyed daughters !

III.

The miles of golden corn  
At thy glad breath were born  
And all the blue sun-nurtured summer weather  
Smiled tenderly round thee,  
And all the sun-kissed sea  
Laughed,—as we trode the clamorous beach together.

IV.

The endless hopes of youth  
Were thine, and fervent truth  
Waved round thy form exultant her white wings,



And glittering fancies past  
Before thee on the blast  
And many sacred dreams of many things.

## V.

Not in the August air  
Alone, love, thou wast fair,  
But in the days of dreams that followed thee ;  
By hills of other lands  
The magic of thine hands  
Was felt, and thy foot fell by many a sea.

## VI.

Never a summer came  
But in the robe of flame  
And flowers that wrapped each summer's soft shape round

Thou wast,—and the urgent seas  
Still washed as toward thy knees  
And still thy beauty winter's chains unbound.

VII.

Into the strange dim land  
Of Poesy thine hand  
Imperious and girl-queenly beckoned me :  
And there I found again  
With throbs of joy and pain  
The clear divine unaltered spirit of thee.

VIII.

Though round about my head,  
Now the old dream hath fled,  
Loves many and of other shores have bound

Red flowers, and white and pale,  
Are such wreaths of avail  
If on life's lintel once thy foot doth sound ?

## IX.

If once the sense of seas  
Comes, and of gracious breeze  
That o'er the wide luxurious tideway hovers,  
How vanishes the town,  
And all its gateways frown,  
While smile the sandy cliffs and short oak-covers !

## X.

Again the ripples dance  
Before our eager glance,  
O Alice of the giant-remembered sea :

And suns long-hidden shine,  
And pliant gold woodbine  
I weave into a circlet meet for thee.

XI.

Thy beauty made the air  
Of summer yet more fair  
And every rose of summer softer still :  
Thy sweetness made the days  
Diviner and my lays  
Flash forth like light-beams sparkling down a rill :

XII.

Thy splendour made the white  
Waves but a lesser sight  
And all the moon-beams but inferior rays :

Thy glory made my dreams  
Resplendent with wild gleams,—  
Made marvellous the far-lit water-ways :

## XIII.

Thy softness made each morn  
A joy-god newly born :  
Thy tender love was as the hand of thee  
Moulding all things anew  
Beneath emergent blue  
That flamed no more storm-shadowed o'er the sea :

## XIV.

Thy laughter made the land  
No more a waste of sand  
Whereover hopeless roamed youth's shuddering tread,

---

But one wide land of flowers  
Wherethrough the honied hours  
On wings of quivering rainbow-rapture sped.

XV.

No more when thee I saw  
I felt the old strong awe  
Of poets, singers elder and divine ;  
I knew that I might meet,  
Because thy mouth was sweet,  
Fearless their long and laurel-crownèd line.

XVI.

I knew that through thy strength  
My power would come at length  
And that my grey-eyed Alice of the sea

Among their loves would stand,  
A queen amid the band  
Of English queens through the wild harp of me.

## XVII.

I stood forth,—and I sang ;  
Sometimes with sorrow-pang  
Smitten, and sometimes pierced with dart of glee ;  
But ever in my sight  
Keeping thy grey eyes' light  
And the old light that glistened o'er our sea.

## XVIII.

That this one thing be done  
Ere solemn set of sun  
I've vowed,—and struggle towards it as I may ;

That thy name may be high  
'Mid names that cannot die,  
When comes for me the closing of my day :

XIX.

That, when no sound again  
Is heard, no new love-strain,  
No further voice or lyre or harp of me,  
Still may thy memory cling,  
A white immortal thing,  
To the world's heart as deathless as the sea :

XX.

That, when the new harps come  
And men seek back for some  
Fairest of those who filled to-day with glee,



They may with rapture find  
This singing-wreath I've twined  
About thy brows, O lady of the sea :

## XXI.

With rapture not for sake  
Of this the song I make,  
But for the sake of thee the song's white flower ;  
Oh, may the future know  
Thy beauty, when I go,  
Silenced at mine inevitable hour !

## XXII.

New queens of love will shine,  
New waves, as white a line,  
Sweep upward, thundering o'er the yellow sands

In autumns crisp and fair,—  
But will the new years bear  
As sweet a woman as thou for new glad lands?

XXIII.

Will others of thy name  
Come, not the very same,  
But even as fair, with singers at their feet?  
Will even our old woods thrill  
To voices and the hill  
For these be whitened with fresh meadow-sweet?

XXIV.

Yes :—many a rose most red  
Though thou and I be dead  
Shall cast imperious perfume through the land,

And many women fair  
Wind wonderful dark hair  
Or golden ringlets, shining band on band.

## XXV.

New passions shall awake,  
New hearts with rapture shake,  
And the same silver moonbeam thrill the sea,  
When thou and I are gone  
To loveless lands and wan,—  
Sweetheart, what shall abide of thee and me?

## XXVI.

My singing shall abide :  
This vision of my Bride :  
And all our songful glory of meadow-sweet

That fadeless and in flower  
We gift with living power  
To blossom even around our vanished feet.

XXVII.

The new glad streams shall sound  
And new delight abound  
And new loves' silvery laughter fill with glee  
The woods where we with slow  
Step wandered long ago ;  
Again young hearts shall dream beside our sea.

XXVIII.

But as for us we pass  
Beyond earth's flowers and grass ;  
No mortal foot may pause, but onward each

Hurries to things unseen,  
Through pale springs and the sheen  
Of golden summers, and wild autumns' speech.

## XXIX.

Never again we tread  
The old land : it is dead :  
Never the green cliffs quite the same shall stand  
For us,—or the blue seas  
Answer the self-same breeze,  
Or hand thrill quite as softly tingling hand.

## XXX.

Never a rose escapes  
The winter and new-drapes  
Its beauty : never, Alice of the sea,

Shall quite the same eyes meet  
Mine own, or same voice greet  
My coming,—or the same love gladden thee.

XXXI.

But ever through my song  
The same waves sound their strong  
Triumphant paean,—and the streams pervade  
The woods with silver speech  
And moons illumine the beach  
And white flowers fill the tangled forest-shade.

XXXII.

In song they speak again ;  
My singing is the fane  
Wherein thou art enshrined with all thy flowers ;

There is not one which fails,  
From all those summer vales,  
To adorn thine own perennial singing-bowers :

## XXXIII.

Not one bud pale and dim  
But blossoms in my hymn ;  
Not one moon-silvered wavelet but doth sound  
Within the singing walls  
Wherethrough my spirit calls  
To thee ; wherein thine answering soul is found :

## XXXIV.

Not one rose but is grand  
Within the singing-land,  
And oh, thou sea-sweet woman, thou art there

Never diviner yet,  
Nor tenderer eyelids wet ;  
Never more queenly,—never yet more fair :

XXXV.

Unchanged and as of old  
Thine hand in mine I hold  
Within the singing-temple I have made,  
And through its arches clear  
Thy ringing laugh I hear  
And robelike round me falls love long-delayed :

XXXVI.

And with our words the tides  
Mix, on the same shore-sides,  
And voices of the woods,—thy soul and me



Blending in love as fair  
As August morning's air  
When first we met, O Alice of the Sea !

*THE DEAD POET.*

## I.

“ Leave him to me, ye roses which he sought,  
And all ye hills and vales,—  
And all ye green-robed dales  
Made sweeter now for ever by his thought.

## II.

“ Leave this dead poet unto me,” God said :  
“ And all ye women fair  
Whose sweet breath and whose hair  
Round him for passion’s aureole was shed.

## III.

“Ye understood him not : the waves he sang  
Were deaf and mute and blind  
And soulless, and mankind  
Was soulless too, —while yet his harp-string rang.

## IV.

“Though women loved him, yet they held him not  
As I, his God, can hold  
And round about him fold  
Arms sweeter than rose-sprays in sunniest spot.

## V.

“He has become a very part of me ;  
And ye who pierced and slew  
And ran your keen swords through  
His bleeding yearning spirit, — where are ye ?

VI.

“ Ye pass away like morning from the deep :—

But I with great glad hands

Wind soft pure white grave-bands

Around the man and rock the soul to sleep ;

VII.

“ That when the resurrection great stars rise

He may arise and meet

With awful smile and sweet

The woman's soul in mine, his true God's, eyes.

VIII

“ I am his love,—I, God ; I bear away

The heart that not one heart

Loved and brought not a dart

As well as love,—yours only is the clay !

## IX.

“ But mine is the strong soul that, loving each,  
    Would not forsake, but held  
    Till all his power was quelled  
By death,—the soul that strove my love to teach.

## X.

“ And now ye have him not : he finds in me  
    More than ye gave of rest ;  
    More than most tender breast  
Of woman gave of closest sympathy.

## XI.

“ I the great God-bride hold him, and I close  
    Above his toil-worn head  
    The eternal arms that shed  
Fragrance about him holier than the rose ;

XII.

“ And with mine awful spirit-thrilling kiss  
    I make mine own what ye  
    Had, and ye would not see,—  
And mix my deathless woman-soul with his.”

*THE HUMAN LITANY.*

*Christians.*—Hear us, Father ! since within the garden  
Christ wept tears of blood, be kind and pardon  
Numberless misdeeds :

*Men and Women.*—Hear us, Mother ! by the pangs of nations,  
By unknown unmeasured tribulations,  
By each soul that bleeds !

*Chr.*—Hear us, Father ! since thy Son sank slowly  
Into awful death-embrace, the Holy  
And the spotless King !

*M. and W.*—Hear us, Mother ! hear us by the crying  
Of the waste sad world in darkness lying ;  
Help the hands that cling !

*Chr.*—By Christ's bloody sweat and cross and passion,  
Father, we beseech thee mould and fashion  
Man to work thy will !

*M. and W.*—Mother ! though their Christ were god and  
prophet,  
Yet our modern world, he knew not of it ;  
Knew not doubts that kill !

*Chr.*—Father ! by thy dear Son's awful anguish,  
Help the weary sheep that faint and languish  
Left on the earth alone !

*M. and W.*—Mother ! by the awful speechless burden  
Many souls bear, grant for rest and guerdon  
Lands where no hearts groan !



*Chr.*—By the patience that he showed in dying,  
We beseech thee, pardon sinners lying  
Under thy just ban !

*M. and W.*—Holy Mother-God ! Christ's pains were single :  
In the human cup *all* sorrows mingle :  
On the cross of Man !

*Chr.*—By the cross of Jesus, Father hear us !  
Help us, lift us, sanctify and cheer us,—  
By the nails that slew !

*M. and W.*—By the cross of Man, O Mother save us !  
In Man's own deep red blood-ocean lave us,  
Till our souls are new !

*Chr.*—Father ! by the spears and mocking speeches,  
Lift our heart, we pray,—till heaven it reaches,  
Following in Christ's tread !

*M. and W.*—By the cross of Woman, Mother, aid us :

Let the arms of stricken Woman shade us :

God ! they are so red !

*Chr.*—By his slow heart-beats now nearly stopping

And the pale head on the shoulder dropping,

Hear us, O our Lord !

*M. and W.*—By the strange weird glimmer of Her whiteness

Mingled on the Cross with that blood-bright-  
ness,—

Save from sorrow's sword !

*Chr.*—By Christ's pain all human pains exceeding ;

By his sacred body bruised and bleeding,

We beseech thee, hear !

*M. and W.*—By the Cross where Woman through the ages

Hangs and dies, while round the rough crowd  
rages,

Soothe away our fear !

*Chr.*—By Christ's goodness greater than of mortal,  
We beseech thee, ope thou heaven's high  
portal ;  
Let us enter in !

*M. and W.*—By the endless gentle heart of Woman  
Christ-excelling, and all valour human,  
Wash away our sin !

*Chr.*—By Christ's glory all things else excelling  
And his endless pity of heart forth-welling,  
Make the far fields bright !

*M. and W.*—Hear us, Mother-God ! by Woman's glory,  
We beseech thee ; through the ages' story  
See ! she shines so white !

*Chr.*—White is Christ : than man or woman whiter :  
And his eyes than mortal eyes are brighter :  
Hear us for his sake !

*M. and W.*—Deeper eyes than Christ's we have among us :  
Shafts of fiercer pain than his have stung us ;  
Do not *our* hearts break ?

*Chr.*—By the deep sweet eyes and by the splendour  
Of Christ's heart and all his bounty tender,  
Father, be our stay !

*M. and W.*—By the heart of Man the Saviour riven,  
And by Woman who to save hath striven,  
Help us on our way !

*Chr.*—By the soul of Christ and all the treasure  
Of his love-deep heart that knows no measure,  
We beseech thee, save !

*M. and W.*—By the grief that hallows all things human,  
By the double cross of Man and Woman,—  
Lift us from the grave !

*HYMN.*

Lift me far beyond the region  
Where thin earthly loves abound :  
Rose-sweet lips on earth are legion,—  
Myriad flowers star earthly ground,—  
Lift me, God, to thine own dwelling  
Where thy ceaseless love is welling  
Forth, and thy great peace is found.

Lo ! I weary of all the passion  
That the old pale earth provides :  
Women's lips and love's same fashion,  
Flowers and laughter, songs and brides :

Take me where some love is deathless ;  
Plant me 'mid thy snow-peaks breathless ;  
    'Mid the plunge of thy great tides.

I am weary ; but I follow,  
    God, the blood-marked track of thee :  
Sweetest songs of earth sound hollow  
    By the music of thy sea :  
Take me where eternal truth is ;  
Where thy love shines, where thy ruth is ;  
    Mould thy likeness into me.

Far beyond the earth's green places,  
    Haunts of flowers and women fair,  
Rose-flushed cheeks and wondrous faces,  
    Set me 'mid thine icy air :  
Give me thine own love immortal ;  
Open thou the sky's blue portal ;  
    Let me pass, and find thee there !  
13

*MY LOVE.*

By the old strange seas loud-breaking  
    Lo ! my love for ever stands,  
And the waves the shingle shaking  
    Are not whiter than her hands ;  
And her breath is sweet as roses  
That the dewy morn discloses  
    When June holds the laughing lands.

Never, though the swift years perish,  
    Shall she quit that ancient shore,  
And the flowers her sweet hands cherish  
    Shall be sweet for evermore :

And the seas' eternal metre  
For her sake shall echo sweeter  
As their endless chant they pour.

Ever, young and pure and tender,  
Doth she wait by those far streams,  
And the summer shares her splendour  
And the waves her girlish dreams,  
And the stars and clouds adore her,  
And the gentle night folds o'er her  
Darkness, and soft moon-spun gleams.

Alice ! not in later regions  
Is the true sweet form of thee,  
But where our winged dreams in legions  
Foam-light, mixed with foam-white sea :  
There art thou, and I, for ever,  
And the flying years part never  
That eternal dream from me !



*IN HER ROOM.*

And canst thou find no way, O wise male lover,—  
No road by which the craving hearts may meet  
And joined lips drink of passion's cup so sweet?  
Doth day provide no bower, nor darkness cover?  
Is there no rose-hung path for yearning feet?

Art thou so puzzled, lover tall and solemn,  
With locks thick-sprinkled with the thoughtful grey?  
Doth passion torture thee from day to day?  
Can ye not kiss for foes in serried column?  
Oh, trust the woman : *she* will find a way!

Thou art so wise and yet so foolish surely !  
Thou art seeking for some far spear-guarded hill  
Where the soft trembling mouths may have their will :  
But lo ! the woman beckons thee demurely  
Towards her own red-geraniumed window-sill.

Right in the midst of friends and guardians, blind one,  
Love ever love's reward most safely reaps :  
Lo ! the fool-husband in the next room sleeps,  
And *he* shall watch so that no foe shall find one ;  
Yea, *he* shall guard,—while breast on bosom weeps !

There is no safer than her own sweet chamber,  
Whereto the passion-mad pale roses creep  
Hovering with tender scent above her sleep :  
Whereto, if thou so willest, thou mayest clamber,  
And drink her beauty through the darkness deep.

There is no sweeter than her own bed whitely  
Seen through the soft still darkness of the room ;  
White,—but less white than her own white rose-bloom ;  
Here thou mayest rest with noble freedom nightly  
While her arms struggle towards thee through the gloom.

And *he* shall watch : for is he not so simple  
And blind and honourless and all impure  
As to believe that bolts and bars secure !  
Because *he* cares not for her Venus-dimple,  
He thinks that passionate cheek cannot allure !

So *he* shall watch and God-condemned be guard  
At his own ignominy ; damnèd fool :  
Who thinks a woman can be trained by rule  
And all her boundless soul pent-up and barred  
And all her measureless passions put to school !

Hark ! in that kiss the thunder of God descends,  
    Thou fool, upon thee ! Thou hast no flower now.  
    Behold, the ring wherewith she once did vow  
Upon another's finger shines ; so ends  
    The miserable farce : be happy, thou !

Turn in thy sleep and sigh with calm content ;  
    Thou hadst a wife ; thou hast a wife no more :  
    The morning sun now gildeth hill and shore,  
And love's wild streams that through long years were pent  
    Adown the eddying echoing valleys roar.

*SONNET.*

## THE CHILD'S HEART.

The child's gold hair is full of summer sun ;  
The child's soft laugh is like the rippling sea,  
Silver, and full of thoughtless harmless glee ;  
She gives thee all her treasures seen of none.  
But thou who hast the child's white spirit won,  
Be heedful with it,—fling it not away ;  
Remember there may come a day—a day—  
When no swift childish feet by thine may run.

Be heedful of her ; if she weary thee,

Be patient : bear with folly, for love's sake :

Fruit of thy travail thou shalt one day see ;

Small things make weaker hearts and childlike ache ;

Great is the worth of spotless purity ;

Be gentle with her, lest the child's heart break.

*"HE WILL NOT SEE!"*

I.

Are the eyes fairer than the dawn of day,  
More tender-hued than tenderest sea-shine's grey,  
Divine to me ?  
Are the lips redder than a budding rose  
And hands more white than lily when it blows—  
He will not see !

II.

Are the swift glances swift as Helen's were  
When for her sake the old-world amorous air  
Trembled with glee ?

---

Hath he a peerless woman at his side,  
Fit for a great-browed god's soft-bosomed bride,  
Yet doth not see ?

III.

Hath he beside him her flower-body bright  
Through the long hours of many a summer night,  
With love's land free ?  
Yet will he enter not, hand locked in hand,  
The fragrant alleys of that mystic land—  
Will he not see ?

IV.

Are the red lips left lone, and unembraced  
The neck, and winter-bound the glowing waist,—  
Must this sin be ?  
He will not see her though his head may rest  
Close by her curved magnificent still breast,—  
But love shall see !



*A JULY SONG.*

I.

The year is flying, dying,—  
 Soon its flowers will flee ;  
     Its tender soft red roses,  
     Its leafy verdant closes,—  
 Soon autumn will be crying,  
     “ What is left for me ? ”

II.

The old loves are flying, dying,—  
 With all their soft-voiced glee ;  
     Their ripples of sweet laughter

And kisses that came after,—  
The fruits of love are lying  
Low now beneath love's tree !

III.

The days are flying, dying,—  
Soon bloom no more will be ;  
The great green leaves so splendid  
With brown tints will be blended,  
The desolate wind go sighing  
Across waste marsh and lea !

IV.

Our passions flying, dying,  
Breathe glory once, then flee ;  
Their summer hues forsake them,—

The cold winds spurn and break them,—  
Their petals low are lying  
Beneath love's wind-tossed tree !

## V.

No word of hope comes flying  
Across wan leagues of sea :  
Our weariness increases  
Now that June-laughter ceases,—  
Our hopes are sighing, dying,  
That blossomed fair and free !

## VI.

The golden corn is lying  
Bright-gold upon the lea :  
But all its rich deep splendour

Outblossoms not the tender  
Spring-leaves that June saw dying,—  
That now dead-brown we see.

VII.

Late loves come flying, sighing,—  
White wings across time's sea ;  
They are not winged with thunder  
To smite time's depths in sunder,—  
They are late and faint and dying,—  
Their lips are nought to me.

VIII.

A sound of song comes flying  
Across far straits of sea :  
The sound of early singing

When love's white hand was clinging,  
Ere yet the flowers learnt dying,  
With tender clasp to me.

## IX.

My heart goes flying, sighing,  
O'er vale and mount and lea ;  
Seeking for one whose glances  
Were once love's flame-tipped lances,—  
A form in dreams descrying  
Which I shall never see !

*HARROW V. ETON AT LORD'S.*

1881.

I.

1.

Just twenty years ago I heard the same shouts sounding,  
 Myself a Harrow boy, not knowing what should come :  
 To-day I watch the ball o'er the live hedges bounding,  
 And as I look back all my heart is sick and dumb.

2.

If any knew his fate, would any live I wonder !  
 Upon the same hill-side where my young fancies grew  
 The wave of Byron's life that burst in flame and thunder  
 First gathered force,—then paused, ere its full power it  
 knew.

## 3.

Would he have lived? Would any, knowing all the sorrow  
And all the pain that love in the near future brings,  
The boyish life once spent, endure the chill to-morrow  
And live when living means to crawl with broken wings!

## 4.

O far green Harrow fields that Byron loved, and splendour  
Of blue clear Harrow skies, I think of you to-day,  
While clear above the ground the pale-blue sky hangs tender,  
Breaking in streaks through clouds and London's chronic  
grey.

## 5.

To-day I hear the shouts and all my spirit glances  
Straight back o'er twenty years, and I can hear the sound  
As then I heard,—again my heart with pleasure dances  
When a grand Harrow hit curls far beyond the bound!

6.

But then the twenty years with speechless desolation

    Weigh on me like a mount of awful granite stone :

Years of desire and failure, love and tribulation,

    And starless hopeless nights and happiness o'erthrown !

7.

And through them all there gleam the eyes that first impelled  
    me

    Along new passion's road and changed me to a man :

Chained and encircled fast, and charmed and bound and  
    held me,

    When the soft rose of love to blossom first began.

8.

How passing strange to think that these boy-hearts awaking

    To eager life to-day are ignorant indeed :

Yet that on each ere long love's pitiless morning breaking

    Will change the hearts that sing to weary hearts that  
    bleed !



## 9.

No spirit shall escape the love-doom waiting ready ;  
Ready to seize and bind and shape to newer things :  
All shall be caught and whirled around the frothing eddy ;  
Few shall emerge with whole unbruised unbattered wings !

## 10.

Ye cannot pause: pass onward; meet your fate quite fearless;  
And after twenty years if ye be here again,  
Watching as I now watch with stony heart and tearless,  
Ye will have learnt that life is love, and love is pain.

## II.

## 11.

Ye know so little now of what shall surely follow ;  
Your vision reaches not beyond the cricket-field ;  
You Venus touches not, nor gold-harped great Apollo ;  
The sun gleams bright upon each undimmed boyish  
shield.

12.

Yet there shall come a day when sweeter than the laughter  
Of cricket-comrade brave and many a trusty friend  
A girl's soft laugh shall sound : a wonderful hereafter  
Towards which your thoughtless eager swift-foot ways  
ye wend.

13.

Deeper and sweeter things there are than ye are dreaming  
In this strange world of ours where love is linked to pain :  
Eyes fairer than the eyes with cricket-rapture beaming ;  
Praise far more thrilling than the praise to-day ye gain.

14.

The flowers ye pluck to-day are daisies pure and tender ;  
But ah ! there are strange flowers far richer on the way :  
The awful tameless rose with untouched fiery splendour  
Flames through the mists that robe the coming years  
in grey.

## 15.

Wonderful dreams await you ! Blossoms soft and burning  
And the great sun-kissed skies of summers yet unseen :  
But wait in peace and still to-day's unfevered yearning  
By mellow ring of bat upon the cricket-green.

## 16.

The future hath its wings and they will overtake you ;  
Rapture may dwell in front,—but so may fieriest pain :  
Gather strength that ye may, when passion's wild throbs  
shake you,  
Mix with the victor-few, not with the countless slain !

*July 7, 1881.*

*THE MOUNTAIN-YOUTHS AND THE  
VALLEY-MAIDENS.*

*Mountain-youths.*

The high hills beckon us,—we must be climbing,  
Not lingering in this valley-land, love-rhyming ;  
Our path is steep :

*Valley-maidens.*

Nay ! rest awhile amid the valley-roses ;  
Soft to the weary eyelid are green closes,  
And soft is sleep.

*Youths.*

Lo ! the high sun upon the mountains yonder  
Beckons ; if foot be frail or heart would ponder,  
What hope abides ?

*Maidens.*

Within our arms are dreams that man may treasure,  
And rest divine, and sweetness beyond measure ;  
Choose *us* for brides !

*Youths.*

Our brides are mountain-peaks and snow-fields colder  
If not more white than white seductive shoulder ;  
Ye do not well :

*Maiden.*

Yet take this rose soft-scented from my bosom ;  
Amid the high peaks it may smile and blossom,—  
Sweet is the smell !

*Youths.*

The flowers of noble labour 'mid the mountains  
Are sweeter than your limpid bubbling fountains.  
And valley-dew :

*Another Maiden.*

My hair is black ; will one of you not take me ?  
Are ye all cowards and heartless to forsake me,  
Ye climbing crew !

*Youths.*

The sun is gold upon the high peaks splendid,  
With sacred mystic valiant cloud-wreaths blended ;  
Our wings must soar !

*Another Maiden.*

My hair is gold ; wilt thou not just once kiss it ?  
One kiss!—thou 'lt never amid the high peaks miss it !  
Just once ; no more !

*Youths.*

Nay, far beyond these things our mission takes us ;  
Desire of lowly common joys forsakes us ;  
We seek a star :

*Maidens.*

Ah ! there are women 'mid those high peaks surely !  
Maidens who wait you,—and their eyes demurely  
Watch from afar.

*Youths.*

No maidens : only the high blue sky's glances  
And the swift light that round the hill-top dances  
And the arms of death :

*Maidens.*

And here ye have the arms that never weary  
And our songs sweet and full of fire and eerie  
And love's own breath.

*Youths.*

And if we quit the mountains and their splendour  
Can ye be true and pure of heart and tender  
As were our dreams?

*Maiden.*

Kiss me, and cease the old mad perverse endeavour;  
The highest hill-tops man shall traverse never;  
Rest by these streams!

*Youth.*

Ah! ye are real, and all the dreams were meagre;  
And ye are young and tender-lipped and eager;  
How hard to choose!

*Maiden.*

See now I bare for thee my naked bosom,—  
A white unkissed unblemished maiden blossom,—  
Canst thou refuse?



*Youths.*

Ah ! all the old dreams adown the wind are sailing  
And ardour's plumes, alert before, are failing ;  
The mountains fade :

*Maidens.*

And' our rose-lips advance to hail and greet ye ;  
Our wondrous singing subtle mouths entreat ye ;  
Here is deep shade !

*Youths.*

Ah ! spirits fair within your soft embraces  
Fold us, and soothe the sad storm-beaten faces  
In tight arms pressed :

*Maidens.*

Yea, we will hold you as the bower of roses  
Round lovers yearning fragrant tendrils closes,  
Till tired hearts rest :

Mournful voices of the mountain-maidens heard dimly from  
afar.

*We would have given you all ye sought of pleasure,—*


*Yea, even immortal passion's priceless treasure,*

*Nor wronged your quest !*

*TO A CRITIC.*

*Thou* to parley with a poet,  
Vapid critic-creature—thou—  
Thou art blind and dost not know it ;  
Dank locks flutter round thy brow ;  
Who art thou to preach and bluster  
To the fools that round thee cluster,—  
Hearts that at thy mandate bow ?

Lo ! the poet sings to roses  
And the hours of summer days :  
In the woods his heart reposes,  
'Mid the rathe green bowery sprays :



Lo ! the poet hath the foaming  
Wide seas round his footstep roaming,—  
Round his brow the awful bays.

Through his heart storm strife and anguish ;  
All his soul is white with pain ;  
Often through long hours that languish  
Must he garner song's red grain :  
*Thou*,—thou hast no heart to suffer ;  
When the surges' heads grow rougher  
Thou in harbour dost remain !

When the great seas' hoary splendour  
Shines beneath the grey low sky,  
Thou art vanquished : when the tender  
Flakes of rainbow-froth soar high,  
Thou art safe in inland region ;  
Though the forms of gods were legion,  
Storm-tossed, thou would'st not be nigh !

What knowest thou of woman's passion,  
Critic with the mincing tread :  
Woman loves not in thy fashion ;  
Not for thee the rose is red ;  
Not for thee divine emotion  
Yearns forth, rippling like the ocean,—  
Thou, alive, art worse than dead !

*Thou* to teach us, thou to reach us  
With thy simpering silly ways !  
Thou to impugn us and impeach us !  
Thou to chisel and chip our lays !  
*Thou* to teach us love's true beauty  
And to point towards path of duty,—  
What damnation were thy *praise* !

*DEATH.*

The mantle of a vast exceeding peace  
Over the lonely wandering poet fell :  
The noises of the worldly war did cease,  
And all was well.

Some understood him better, now that death  
Had folded round him its embrace secure  
And breathed upon him with its awful breath  
Most sweet, most pure.

The women who had followed through wild ways  
    With love and longing in most tender hands  
Brought him his roses and his wreath of bays  
    Plucked in lone lands.

But over him fell sweet unbroken sleep  
    And rest divine that nought could change or mar ;  
One woman watched his grave with great grand deep  
    Gaze like a star.

Nought moved her from his grave : his other queens  
    Sought other pleasures,—bought and sold and slept ;  
But still, where over him the grey stone leans,  
    This woman wept.

They found her there one summer morning dead  
    Beneath the solemn marriage-sealing sun,  
To his live endless deathless spirit wed,—  
    So these were one.

*ONE WOMAN.*

They knew him not : do blossoms understand

    The hand that plucks them and that finds them fair?

Do the waves apprehend the stedfast land,—

    The birds the air?

They knew him not : although their tender eyes

    Seemed sometimes with soft passionate haze to swim :

Although with gracious words and gentle guise

    They followed him.



What *can* the blossoms understand of fire ?

The gentle doves of swift devouring flame ?

But one great heart was great as his desire :

One woman came.

One fiery spirit smote his own with light

And stood before him and was not afraid ;

Most passionate, yet most pure ; most strong, yet white ;

Divinely made.

They mingled each with each in awful sleep

And knew each other's very inmost soul :

Then parted like great sundering waves that leap

Lone to the goal.

But still they bore away the flame and fire

Of each, each gathering up the other's might :

The one was strengthened with sublime desire

And great sweet might,—

The other's heart was softened as he lay  
    Within the woman's arms so grand and pure,  
And one white rose of love he bore away  
    That shall endure,

And ever in sorrow this great woman's heart  
    Was with him when the others fled and failed :  
Hard at him lunged grim pain's remorseless dart,—  
    She never quailed.

And when his hair with all the night's harsh dew  
    Was wet, she stood beside him in the field ;  
Stood, till once more heaven's mid-day cloudless blue  
    Burned on his shield.

And she would wind about him tender hands,  
    And bring him blossoms fairer than a dream,  
And lift his spirit towards immortal lands  
    Where great suns beam.

Her heart was not as common hearts that glow,  
Then in one day the ephemeral rapture fades :  
But she was one with him through joy and woe,—  
Through sunlit glades

And through the dark defiles of sin and death  
She helped her singer on his perilous way,  
Making the lone vales blossom with her breath,—  
Making night day :

For she immortal and of ceaseless charm  
Knew how to wake to might or lull to sleep ;  
Ever within the circle of her arm  
Was rapture deep :

Red bloom of sin and terror drove her not  
From the sad singer's weary side in fear ;  
She cleansed his life from fleck and stain and spot,  
With many a tear :

Herself she gave him, and her awful white  
    Stainless and chainless body and white soul  
Became to him the high God's very light  
    To illumine the goal :

Nought severed : but the eternal souls were one  
    And shall be,—while the ages speed or creep,—  
Through flight of moon and race of fiery sun,—  
    Till all stars sleep.

*THE SINGER.*

Born under skies of blue,  
While summer yet was new  
The singer learnt his song

From flowers of summer days,  
From scented woodland sprays,  
From clouds, a white-clad throng—

From maidens' lips most fair,  
From joy of golden hair  
Let loose the woods among.

He hath no part with death :  
But only with the breath  
Of life and living things ;

Only with songs and seas  
And the June amorous breeze  
And the brown throstle's wings

And the gold moons of night  
Whose mystic throbbing light  
Love's subtle madness brings.

He hath not met despair,  
But only the strange fair  
Face that filled all his dream

When yet the world was young  
And only love-chants rung  
Beside the ocean-stream :

What hath December grey  
And red-leafed autumn day  
To do with green June-gleam ?

Right glad is he that June,  
Yea, the full summer's noon,  
Beheld him born to earth ;

For then her days most fair  
Are filled with sweetest air  
And greenest is her girth

And all the heart of things  
With silverest laughter rings  
And with most fluent mirth.

When the June-flowers were thick  
And shafts of June-suns quick  
The poet-child was born

And ever round him grows  
Thought's patient thornless rose  
In love with the June-morn

And little part hath he  
With the grey wintry sea  
And wintry winds forlorn.



Born of the English race,  
Yet all his fervent face  
Sought Greece, and Greece he knew,

And Grecian love of Art  
Was innate in his heart  
And love of Southern blue ;

Yea, 'mid the asphodel  
Cream-white, his footstep fell,  
And not 'mid English dew.

The power to seize and bind  
In music for mankind  
The Beauty that pervades

The solemn wind-swept hills  
And swift white-foaming rills  
And sacred woodland shades

Was his,—and power to meet  
In wild embrace and sweet  
The nymphs and forest maids.

So, being not of them,  
No crown nor diadem  
Did English hands supply :

England gave streams and flowers  
And green-draped fragrant bowers  
And wealth of deep-blue sky

And, at the last, a grave

By her sad singing wave

And room enough to die.

*COMPENSATION.*

The poet hath to sing though no man hears,  
And though the dreary years  
Bring nought of sympathy :  
He hath the sun and sea.

The poet hath to love though hope be dead  
And lonely his tired head :  
Though no man take his part,  
He hath the rose's heart.

The poet hath to sing though all his words  
Be as the notes of birds  
Flung to the bitter breeze :  
Yet hath he the blue seas.

The poet hath to love though all his brain  
Be torn with lonely pain :  
Devoid of love's delight,  
He hath the sweet wild night.

The poet hath to sing though fools surround  
With mocking weary sound :  
While the coarse hearer raves  
He watches the sea-waves.

The poet hath to love though even God  
Seem banished from the sod :  
Though God's voice cease to ring,  
He hears his own heart sing.

The poet hath to sing though all be dark,  
Yea not one golden spark :  
He hath his golden lyre  
And his own godhead's fire.

The poet hath to love though all be lost  
And smitten of hail or frost :  
Travelling the earth flame-shod,  
With the great stars and God.

*FROM CHURCH TO THE SEA.*

I heard a preacher preach of hell  
    With tongue that raved right well :  
I left the Church and sought the sea,—  
    Its hand laid hold of me.

The dear great sea-waves bathed me round  
    With mystic soothing sound :  
The stars shone forth from flameless sky ;  
    I knew hell was a lie.

I knew the preacher was a liar,—

He and his lake of fire :

The cool sweet sea put out his lake ;

My worn heart ceased to ache.

The living God was in the sea,—

His hand laid hold of me :

In all the waves that rose and fell

I saw no shadow of hell.

Far stretched the boundless hell-less blue ;

No hell-flames glittered through :

Above me bent the clear night-sky ;

I heard no prisoners' sigh.

The preacher died, and God arose

Sweet in his grand repose :

“ Heed not these fools and liars,” he said,

“ Whose souls are worse than dead.



"Meet *Me* by night beside the seas  
Or in the wind-waved trees  
And thou shalt learn eternal things,  
Soft-shielded by my wings."

So God spoke through the sky and sea  
That strange great night to me :  
And hell-fire ceased for evermore,—  
All slavish fear was o'er.

*DEAD !*

The thick gold hair  
 That was so fair  
 Falls like a mantle round  
 Her body in it wound.

The clear grey eyes  
 That shone like skies  
 Are closed : they will not wake  
 Or soften for my sake.

*DEAD !*

The lips so red  
Are mute and dead :  
I have waited nigh a week,  
And yet they will not speak !

*Never* again !

There is the pain.  
And I may seek for tears  
Through forty years !

*THE SEA.*

Away from leaves and bowers  
And love's soft summer hours,  
May-showers and June-flowers,  
                                    To the sea  
I pass : its great waves greet me ;  
Its fresh salt strong winds meet me ;  
                                    I am free.

Free from the town-oppression ;  
Its ceaseless dull progression

Of hot days in procession

That weigh down :

The glad blue waters cheer me ;

No flower or leaf is near me,

Red or brown.

No flowers are here : the breathing

Wide mass of waters seething

Around my feet is wreathing

Flowers of foam :

All other bloom forsakes me

As the sweet sea's breath takes me

To its home.

No voice of love beseecheth :

No enemy impeacheth :

The grey wild water reacheth

To the sky :

Alone we hear its hymning,  
Far from frail flowers and women,  
God and I.

*LQNELY.*

Lonely,—devoid of help from God or man  
The poet ploughs his way  
Through seas of sorrow grey  
And wan.

If neither God will aid nor man's frail heart  
Nor heart of woman fair,  
Yet must the poet dare  
His part.

Though he stand inconceivably alone,  
    Anguished unspeakably,  
    Yet hath he sky and sea  
        For throne.

Though God be weak and not one rose's breath  
    Gladden,—he must not sink  
    But sorrow's full cup drink  
        Till death.

Nor must he hope for honour or reward :  
    No hope of glory here,  
    Only pain's bleak white sheer  
        Sharp sword.

And, perhaps, a leaf or two of scanty bays,—  
    Just one green leaf or two,  
    Yet never summer's blue  
        Sweet days.



Never the heyday of the flawless rose :

No soul-companionship

Though craving lip touch lip

That glows.

But lonely lingering struggling baffled years

And nights when no moon shines

And thorn-crowns man's hand twines

And tears.

*A JOURNEY.*

The same green hills, the same blue sea,—  
Yet, love, thou art no more with me !

The same long reach of yellow sand,—  
Where is the touch of thy soft hand ?

The same wide open arch of sky,—  
But, sweetheart, thou no more art nigh !


God love thee and God keep thee strong :  
I breathe that pure prayer through my song !

I send my soul across the waste  
To seek and find thy soul in haste !

Across the inland woods and glades  
And through the leaf-laced chequered shades

My spirit passes seeking thee :  
No more I tarry by the sea.

For where thou art, am I for ever :  
Mere space and time divide us never.

*ON THE DOWNS.*

The sweet air from the downs  
My fevered forehead crowns :  
The tossing white-maned sea  
Lays joyous hold of me.

But thou art far away  
From downs and whirling spray ;  
Skies, winds, and waves once glad,  
Miss thee,—and all are sad.

Not all the shining air  
That crowns these corn-fields fair  
Is worth one glance of thine  
That makes all airs divine.

Not all the curling seas  
That kiss the fresh strong breeze  
Are worth thy soul's white wings  
And all the peace it brings.



*SEA-POPPIES.*

## I.

From preachers preaching by the sea,  
     Good Lord, deliver me !  
 They preach of Christ and heaven and hell,  
     But the white sea-waves swell ;  
 I turn from heaven—and sweet the drop is !—  
     To the great gold sea-poppies !

## II.

They fill the air with fiery lies ;  
     I watch the grey clear skies :  
 The wreaths of sea-weed sweeter smell


Than their foul fumes of hell !  
From preachers lying by the sea,  
Sea-God, deliver me !

## III.

Sky-spaces stretch forth calm and far  
Waiting for crown of star ;  
These preachers belch their venom out  
With ribald prayer and shout ;  
From preachers blustering by the sea,  
Sky-God, deliver me !

## IV.

Fairer to me is one fair face  
Than all their gold-harped place :  
Blue bugloss and the pink rest-harrow



Laugh at their poisoned arrow !  
The setting sun smiles soft and copies  
The yellow-cheeked beach-poppies !

V.

From vulgar narrowing thoughts of men,  
Lord, lift us forth again !  
Stretch out thy sunlike gracious hand  
Over the sea and land :  
Blend our unfettered souls with thy  
Great chainless sea and sky !

VI.

From foolish tongues belying thee,  
Good Lord, deliver me !  
Let the blue-leaved gold-faced sea-flowers



That love the sea's salt showers  
And fear no hell and seek no crown  
Smooth out my soul's fierce frown !



*A SEA-DAY.*

The laughing waves are green and white ;

They surge with measureless delight ;

To-day

What can one think of but their might ?

All hearts must own their sway.

No thought of lady's bower of rose

To-day around the rapt heart goes ;

To-day

Before us the wide water flows

Green, blue, and wild and grey.

O measureless majestic sea  
Thou layest hand and breath on me

To-day :

I join the reckless plangent glee  
Of thy far-reaching spray.

All thoughts of passion cease,—and flowers  
Fade out beneath these salt strong showers

To-day :

And all the buds on woman's bowers  
Fade swiftly quite away.

No woman now with curling white  
Smooth inland body gives delight ;

To-day

I join thy curling swirling might,  
Sea, filling all this bay !

---

No woman now with massed black hair  
And ripe red mouth is soft and fair :

To-day

Thy buoyant breath fills all the air,  
Sea, and thy coursers play !

No inland bower receives me, deep,  
And full of scents that lull to sleep,

To-day :

I stand upon the shingle steep  
Where gold sea-poppies stray.

What is a woman to the sea  
Whose loving hand lays hold of me,

Spray-wet :

Let no white arms around me be !

*And yet—and yet—and yet—*

*VENUS.*

The great sea's infinite repose  
Is even as when white Venus rose  
Love-glancing ;  
Ah ! is not this her shape that glows  
Advancing ?

'Tis *we* have changed : the pure sweet sea,  
Venus, alone is worthy thee ;  
Its splendour  
Expects thy coming with soft glee  
Most tender !

The seas of Greece were not more fair  
Than this which shines in August air  
                                Before me :  
The deep sky stretches blue and rare  
                                High o'er me.

'Tis *we* have changed : the sea to-day  
Is thine as ever in this bay  
                                Sun-gladdened ;  
And still thy white limbs mock the spray,  
                                Unsaddened !

*August 21, 1881.*

Through self-denial and the extreme  
 Repression of love's fiery dream  
                                   Thou followest on :  
 Far heights before us rise and gleam,—  
                                   Cold heights and wan !

Not ours the daily chequered life,  
Chequered but sweet, of man and wife,  
                    But ours the strange  
Wild ways of lonely constant strife  
                    That knows no change !

Not ours to meet save in the bliss  
Of sacrifice, *the pale-lipped kiss*  
                    *From cross to cross.*  
This is our life's one love-crown, this,—  
                    All else is loss.



*AT THE LAST.*

When I receive thee bleeding  
From all the thorn-crowns of the weary years,  
God having heard our pleading  
At last with merciful and tender ears,

Shall I not find thee fairer  
For all the horror of the lonely way,—  
Thou, doomed to be a sharer  
In my life's skies so bitter, gaunt, and grey?

Will not thy lips be sweeter  
Than rosebud trifling lips of untrained child,  
And thine embrace completer  
For all the past nights when pain's winds were wild?

And shall not I be nearer  
And far more meet, O sorrow's queen, for thee,  
More husbandlike and dearer,  
For blows of many a surge of pain's grim sea?

*A POET'S LOYALTY.*

Not to a queen or king  
Is the deep inmost spirit in me loyal,  
But to the waves that sing  
Round English shores, and fling  
Against our cliffs their hoary mantles royal.

A crowned head in my sight  
Hath little import : flower-crowned hills have more ;  
And the grim surges white,  
Or blue waves soft and bright  
That ripple gently on a sunlit shore.

No prince or ruler holds  
The free land of my heart : it dwells amid  
The heather-purpled wolds  
And in the green woods' folds,—  
Yea, 'mid the mountain-steeps my heart is hid.

England herself I own  
For queen, sweet with the laughter of her sea  
And grand on mountain-throne,—  
Her face and fresh lips blown  
By circling chainless air eternally.

*BALCOMBE.*

Quiet woods bend o'er me,  
     Tender ferns and sweet  
 Cluster low before me,  
     Kiss my feet.

Autumn berries glisten  
     In the hedges green :  
 Brown birds as I listen  
     Dart between.

Brown eyes shine beside me ;

Twenty years ago

Riches were supplied me

From their glow !

Cousin ! how we wandered

Through these autumn ways,

Smiled and laughed and pondered

In old days !

Threaded all these alleys,

Gathered berries red

In the green still valleys

Where we tread !

How, to-day, remembrance

Brings again the past

Clear in form and semblance,—

Fashioned fast ;—

Twenty years, or nearly,  
Fold their wings between :  
Yet for me how clearly  
Shines each scene !

Blackberry-copse and streamlet,  
Heather-purple dell,  
Golden-winged young dreamlet,  
Azure bell,—

Sandy rocky hollow,  
Trout-stream brown and deep,  
Wood-side where Apollo,  
Glad, might sleep,—

Boyish thoughts and simple  
And your laughing eyes  
And your laughing dimple  
And grey skies

All return as plainly  
    To my gaze to-day,  
As if time ungainly,  
    Thought could slay !

All return as clearly  
    As if twenty years  
Were one winter merely,—  
    One night's tears !

Balcombe ferns and heather  
    And your brown same eyes  
And the autumn weather  
    And calm skies

Bring it all before me  
    As if but one night  
Threw her mantle o'er me  
    Soft and light ;



Or as if between us

But one summer lay :—

Twenty Junes have seen us

Growing grey !

*Aug. 29, 1881.*

*BEYOND !*

Beyond all ferns and flowers :

Beyond the sunlit bowers :

Beyond the shadow of tree :

Beyond the grass-bright lea !

Beyond dull hearts and hands,

The one who understands !

Beyond dull soul and brain,

The soul that soothes all pain !

Beyond these meadows green,  
The sea's grey glimmering sheen!  
Beyond these stifling vales,  
Sea-breath that never fails !

Beyond those far dim downs,  
The soul my soul that crowns !  
Beyond flower, field and tree,  
*You* and the sea !

*JEZEBEL.*

Who felt the touch of her swift hands,—  
What lord of 'sunstruck Eastern lands?  
Who felt the soft white bosom swell  
Of Jezebel, of Jezebel?

Who, lying on the firm cool breast,  
Found therein sweeter fairer rest  
Than ever on priest or prophet fell,—  
O Jezebel, O Jezebel!

We have lost the fashion of thy face ;  
Gone art thou : scattered is thy race :  
No English breeze in vale or dell  
Lifts now the locks of Jezebel !

Slender wast thou,—or matron-wise  
Shaped, with black subtle serpent-eyes ?  
Where are the strong men who could tell  
To us the glory of Jezebel ?

They all are gone along with thee,  
And we who pace by grey-blue sea  
What know we of the souls in hell  
For thy sake, deep-haired Jezebel !

Could one but tell us of thy form !  
One mouth that kissed thy red lips warm !  
We too might madden 'neath thy spell  
O poison-lipped sweet Jezebel !

But now we know not, nor shall know  
While the green English seasons blow,  
What amorous strange hot hours befell  
The hearts that loved thee, Jezebel !

Long-historied wondrous deathless queen  
Clasping all time in white arms' sheen,  
The prophet-dogs have died pell-mell,—  
Thy lips outlive them, Jezebel !

*UNCOMPANIONED.*

At war with all the human race,  
Where shall I turn my tired-out face?

The meadow-sweet hath sun and air ;  
What hath the poet? Grim despair.

The sea hath wind and storm and light ;  
What hath the poet? Starless night.

Woman hath love and roses' breath ;  
What hath her poet? Pain and death.

*FAREWELL TO BALCOMBE.*

Farewell, ferns and heather !

Cousin with dark eyes !

. Seek I other weather,

Other skies :

Farewell, Church and river ;

Farewell, park and mead

Where the larches quiver,—

Sedge and reed :



Farewell, forest gleaming  
Now with autumn gold  
Where I wandered dreaming  
Dreams of old :

Farewell, friends whose tender  
Love and help and care  
Doubled all the splendour  
Of soft air ;

Friends who made the alleys  
Sweeter from their tread,  
And the fir-lined valleys  
Bracken-red :

Farewell ;—I may never  
See the heather glow  
Here again, but ever  
(That I know)

Will my heart remember  
    These glad autumn days ;  
This red-leaved September  
    With me stays :

And the friendly faces  
    And the brown trout-brooks  
And the mossy places,—  
    Silent nooks.

All the swift short drama,  
    Trust me, entered deep,  
Bright as panorama,  
    My soul's sleep,—

Waking memories olden  
    That will now abide,  
Silver-plumed and golden,  
    At my side.

Far from forest-glory  
    Must my footstep fly ;  
Far from lichens hoary  
    And clear sky ;

Far from heather-dingle,  
    Far from ferny dell,  
Far from pines that mingle  
    Their rich smell ;

Far from hazel-coppice,  
    Far from blackberry-brake,  
Corn and grass and poppies,  
    Stream and lake ;

To the great smoke-city  
    Must I wend my way :  
Take this farewell ditty,  
    Friends, I pray ;

*FAREWELL TO BALCOMBE.*

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Ere I, saddened, leave you,  
For your kindness long  
What I can I give you—  
Just this song !

*Sept.* 21, 1881.

*KEBLE.*

Is this the voice I'm bidden to hear,  
                                 When in mine ear  
 Rings sound of solemn midnight seas  
                                 And voice of trees  
 And spirits who interpret these ?

Am I to bend my head to thee  
                                 When all the sea  
 With strenuous chorus sweet and near  
                                 Sings at mine ear  
 And through its chant God's voice is clear !

“Greatest of poets!” some one says!

Alas! the bays

Have little further weight or worth,

They are food for mirth,

If such man’s song survive on earth!

O Church-pent prisoned feeble soul

Who ne’er didst stroll

Beyond the “lich-gate” and the porch,

Thy spirit’s torch

How the great sun of song would scorch!

The sun that flames around the head

Alive or dead

Of singer who is made divine

By breath of pine

Or by the blue far mountain-line.

What hath true song to do with thee ?

Thou with the sea ?

What hath the summer's fervent blue

Sweet depth to do

With thy pale fancies' churchyard crew ?

O God of hills and lakes and seas

And swaying trees,

Give me no trivial bread and wine

But make me thine

In the soul-life for which I pine !

So shall no church-chant come from me

But song of sea

And mystic tender blossom-song

And many a throng

Of passionate thoughts alive and strong.

No tender churchless love-thought yet  
Hath reader met  
In thy sick arid morbid verse  
Plumed like a hearse  
And heavy with thy Church's curse.\*

No simple love of English rose  
That gleams and blows  
By quiet English hedge in June  
Is in thy tune ;  
All blossoms are thy Church's boon !

Therefore, O bard, thou art not exempt  
From our contempt,  
For we who love the English sea  
And all things free  
Hate and despise thy Church and thee.

\* See Keble's poem, called "Disuse of Excommunication," in the "Lyra Innocentium".



*FAREWELL !*

The early days  
Of lays  
Were glad with help of friends :  
Alas ! how soon  
The June  
Of love and friendship ends !

The sky's clear blue  
How few  
Will follow in heart and seek !

Nay ! one by one  
They shun  
The glimmering mountain-peak !

How long ago  
The glow  
Of early passion flamed !  
How hearts we met  
Forget  
The goal at which we aimed !

Alone we tread  
The dead  
And flowerless mountain-side :  
We have been true  
To you—  
But you your oaths belied !

*FAREWELL!*

O friends so fair  
Who were—  
Who started on the quest  
With us,—hath deep  
Pale sleep  
Your wearied souls possessed?

Are ye so weak?  
The peak  
Still glitters up above!  
The morning air  
Is fair  
With sounds and sights of love!

But in the vale  
Ye wail  
“The mountains are so high!

Why should we dare  
That air  
So arid, fierce, and dry?

“Why should we quit  
Sunlit  
Soft pleasant verdant nooks,  
Where flowers adorn  
At morn  
The green-leaved banks of brooks?

“Why should we seek  
The peak  
Where white rolled vapours brood?  
The mountain’s head  
We dread,—  
That vast weird solitude.”

*FAREWELL!*

Yea,—so they groan  
And moan,  
Knowing not the high hills' charm ;  
Content with their  
Despair  
And nerveless slope of arm.

“ Brothers, good-bye ! ”  
We cry—  
“ And sisters weak, farewell !  
Your heaven of rest,  
Unblest  
By toil, to us is hell !

“ If ye are tired,  
Nor fired  
By sweet hope any more,

Yet we are strong,  
And song  
Is stedfast as of yore !

“ Ah ! while ye slept  
We kept  
Our sacred vow to song :  
And while ye dreamed  
Love gleamed  
Our serried ranks among !

“ We followed through  
The blue  
Strange mists song's flying form,—  
Through thunder-showers  
And powers  
Of the awful black-fledged storm !

*FAREWELL!*

“ And now we near  
The clear  
Sweet regions high and far  
Where love awaits,—  
The gates  
Of the gold morning star !

“ But ye stretch limb  
In dim  
Moist valleys soft and green :  
What part have ye  
With sea  
Or sky or mountains' sheen ?

“ Ye loved, and then  
Again  
Ye wearied and forsook :

Your hearts grew old  
And cold,  
And bribes from men ye took !

“ Yea, ye once swore  
To soar  
And all high things to seek ;  
Not valley-flowers,  
Nor bowers,  
But the august mountain-peak :

“ And, having fled,  
Ye are dead  
To all high valour now ;  
No dawn of gold  
For cold  
Hearts weary of their vow !



*FAREWELL !*

“ Farewell ! Farewell !

Ye fell—

Your wandering steps were weak ;

Not for your throng

The strong

High dawn-flushed summits speak ! ”



*THROUGH THE NIGHT.*

## I.

Weary we are indeed, for stars are none above us,  
Nor friends we have to help, nor lovers' lips to love us,  
    But only our own souls to aid us—you and me ;  
Therefore with urgent voice I bid you rise, and mar not  
The passing fleet-winged days with dreams of things that are  
    not,—  
Rise and be great and mix with the great-hearted sea !

## II.

Lo ! evening now descends,—I pour my blessing on thee ;  
God send the soft flowers' scents and summer dreams upon  
    thee !

And, when we least expect, shall burst upon and blind us,  
Sweeter than moon that beams to-night upon thy sea !

III.

I would that I were there !—that I with thee were sleeping,  
By those calm moonlit tides, for very passion weeping,  
Feeling the sweet night close around us tenderly :  
But since I cannot share the glory, I would follow  
Thy flight through meadows green and many a blossom  
hollow  
On song's swift wings till I alight beside the sea.

IV.

Thou dost not understand : thou art pained ; and yet with  
yearning

Beyond all speech to-night I follow thy foot turning

Ever with instinct sure towards our untrammelled sea.

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# ANTIPHONES.

## I.

*Christians.*

In wondrous white attire we stand,  
And round us gleams the heavenly land,  
And faces by sweet airs are fanned—

*Chorus of Greeks.—*

*And we kiss Venus' snow-white hand !*

## II.

*Christians.*

Saved from the flames of raging hell  
With us and with our souls 'tis well ;  
Now for the lost world sounds its knell—

*Chorus of Greeks.—*

*How sweet these rain-washed roses smell !*

III.

*Christians.*

No flowers of earth,—no lily or rose  
That in pale temporal garden blows,—  
Are sweet or white or pure as those—

*Chorus of Greeks.—*

*That Venus' flower-sweet lips disclose !*

IV.

*Christians.*

Not gardens girt with earthly walls,  
But heavenly lustrous sun-crowned halls  
We have for dwelling : Venus falls—

*Chorus of Greeks.—*

*Nay, silver-voiced her sons she calls !*

## V.

*Christians.*

Hear us, O God ! Thy face is bright  
And we shrink backward from its light ;  
But Christ gives courage, power, and might—

*Chorus of Greeks.—*

*Her breast as moonlit foam is white !*

## VI.

*Christians.*

Hear us, O tender Jesus ! Red  
Thy side is with the blood-drops shed  
For us upon the hill-top dread—

*Chorus of Greeks.—*

*Praise Venus with the golden head !*

*ONE PERFECT WIFE.*

Not all the flowers and bowers wherein love shines  
    With soft seductive feet  
Can still the yearning burning heart that pines  
    For one, and but one, woman sweet.

Not all the songs and throngs of maidens fair  
    With eyes of many hues  
Can banish pain and strain and carking care,—  
    One love, but one, we still would choose :



That she, immortal, endless, still the same,  
Might soothe our soul to rest ;  
To shoot love's arrow once, with but one aim,  
Is wisest after all, and best.

Nought else can heal us, save us, bring us peace,  
Conclude the long wild strife ;  
Light loves but fever us,—all fevers cease  
When we have found one perfect wife.

*"BUT WHERE SHALL MAN'S EYES FIND  
HER?"*

But where shall man's eyes find her?—  
By shores of dim grey sea?  
Or under summer tree?  
Or do the rose-bowers bind her?

Long may he seek, and, seeking,  
Be sick of heart and sere,—  
Ere falls upon his ear  
The sound of her soft speaking.

310 "BUT WHERE SHALL MAN'S EYES FIND HER?"

Yea, old and sad and weary  
He shall be ere the dawn  
Gild forest and wet lawn  
With light so sweet and eerie.

Ere in that light she stands,  
A Bride for evermore,  
With heart whence love-floods pour  
And great immortal hands.

*THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD.*

The dew upon the leaves is wet ;  
We have not travelled far as yet ;  
                                The blossom  
Of youth on the world's brows is set.


Some think the world is worn and old :  
Nay ! all the world's hair gleams with gold,—  
                                Her bosom  
Soft-white doth soft-white flowers enfold.

Full many a long untrodden way  
She'll traverse ere her locks be grey,  
                    Now gilded  
With splendour at the dawn of day.

We have but seen her girlish hours  
Armful and lapful of wild flowers ;  
                    Unbuilt  
Are the great future's towns and towers !

New might of love we dream not yet  
Upon her forehead shall be set,  
                    And glory  
Our longing eyes have never met.

The world is like a girl with zone  
Slender, slim neck, and timid tone,—  
                    The story  
Of love is all a tale unknown.



Or, if she loves, she knows not how  
With all her might of being to bow ;  
                    Most lightly  
She binds love's fillet round her brow.

Yet there shall come the close sweet kiss,  
And depth and height of certain bliss,  
                    And, nightly,  
Love's rose, and greed to gather this.

Not yet the immeasurable embrace  
Makes fervent heaven of all her face  
                    And splendour  
Is added to her girlish grace ;—

Not yet she laughs with near dear eyes  
Into her lover's,—nor replies  
                    With tender  
Low words wherethrough love's shudder flies.

And so the glad world's bridal day  
Yet tarries,—far upon the way,—  
                                She dallies  
With love, while love's fierce wheels delay :

But when from heaven her bridegroom leaps,  
Plunging adown the gold-splashed steeps,  
                                Or sallies  
From the sea's loud storm-sundered deeps,

She shall, mature of heart and strong,  
Chant gravely her grand marriage-song  
                                That waiteth  
Silent the far blue hills among.

We shall not see :—we watch afar  
Like lovers whom sad fate doth mar  
                                And hateth,—  
For whom doth rise not passion's star.

As some lorn lover hath to yield  
His maiden, unto whom he kneeled,  
                                    And know her  
White prize of other sword and shield—

As on the marriage-night he dreams  
Dreams terrible, when the moon gleams,  
                                    Full-flower,  
And through the open window streams—

So we with sorrow yield our world  
In far embraces to be furled,  
                                    As slowly  
We one by one to doom are hurled.

Her majesty of lip and limb  
Is not for us : it waits for him,  
                                    The holy  
Bard hidden within the ages dim.





The world's great soul waits virgin yet :

The globes of dew are round and wet

And pearly

On daisy, pink, and mignonette ;

With virgin girlish eyes cast down

She stands, in white unfigured gown,—

'Tis early,—

*We* shall not see her wear her crown.

*HYMN.*

Along the blood-stained road that Christ's foot trode

We follow hard,—

Watching the sweet eyes of the Son of God

And his brow scarred.

Along the weary lonely devious way

We follow him,

Through midnight blackness till the morning grey,—

Till stars wax dim.

Not on his head love's star-crown shone alone ;

Nay ! all may share

His glory who will share his sorrow's throne

On Calvary bare.

If any man will watch throughout the night,

Though wild winds roam

And on the savage beach the only light

Is light of foam,

He shall partake the deathless crown that he,

The Christ-king, wore :

An honoured guest at his high table be

For evermore.

But first must all his hair be wet with dew,

And he must stand

Lonely beneath the roof of midnight blue

In his own land.

And each upon his special cross must hang,  
True till the end ;  
Each pierced by his own individual pang,—  
Without one friend.

Then shall the morning that beheld Christ free  
See us too rise,—  
Pure as the white air, strenuous as the sea,  
With deathless eyes.

*AN ACTOR'S TRIUMPH.*

## I.

The lights, the music, and the crowd  
 Of eager hearts and eyes :—  
 I had failed before,— to-night I vowed  
 To hold both weak and wise  
 And wrap them in my spirit's shroud  
 As in deep folds of skies,  
 And make the house one temple deep  
 Where men should yearn and women weep.

## II.

To-night my spirit-force should seize  
    Their spirits,—hold them bound.  
I swore it ;—through the scenic trees  
    That waved the horizon round  
I gazed,—She came :—upon my knees  
    I fell—my love was found ;  
My love who (in the drama) fled  
For years, and who, I thought, was dead.

## III.

She came :—I lifted earnest gaze  
    And all my heart grew cold ;  
'Twas not the actress' well-known face,  
    But one I knew of old ;  
(*How through the crowded heated place*  
    *The fiery music rolled !*)  
I saw her,—and I saw the sea  
Shine, when her eyes fell swift on me.

## IV.

Ten years had passed since we had met :

But her grey changeless eyes

Flashed into mine, and held me yet ;

Through the gilt walls the skies

Gleamed, and a moonlit sea-shore wet

Before me seemed to rise—

*(And still the orchestral music rolled*

*And wound about me, fold on fold i)*

## V.

For months another had been there

And played that part with me :

To-night this woman with the old hair

And eyes,—how could it be ?

*(And then again that beach shone fair*

*And rolled that far-off sea*

*In unison with all the sound*

*Of music here that held me bound !)*



## VI.

Then in a flash I saw that she  
This single night had come,  
Sent by the gods to act with me,—  
And wonder held me dumb ;  
Her dark hair fluttered loose and free,  
Full of a strange perfume,  
About me,—and my heart became  
A godlike winged thrice-potent flame.

## VII.

This single night—no more again—  
(I saw it in a gleam)  
I held her ; she would vanish then,  
And with her all my dream :  
To-night with strength of fifty men  
My throbbing veins did teem :  
To-morrow she would vanish when  
The usual actress played again.

VIII.

To-night ! to-night ! then never more—

To-night the prize must fall

Unto my lot ; once let me-soar,

Or ever, worm-like, crawl !

(Gods ! give me this—this, I implore—

This,—or nought else at all !)

Then all that crowded house to me

Grew silent,—like the silent sea.

IX.

I never acted so of old,

And never shall again

Have force around my heart to fold

The hearts of gazing men ;—

My soul grew calm and great and bold,

And strong as souls twice ten :

I kissed her :—and through all the din

She knew I knew, and meant to win.

## X.

Her fiery lips clove fast to mine,  
And my fire thrilled her deep—  
(*We saw the white waves' laughing line*  
*And the soft blossoms' sleep,—*  
*The blossoms that we used to twine*)  
My being with one leap  
Sprang to a height where never yet  
Actor's and lover's foot was set.

## XI.

"To-night," I whispered, "fly with me"—  
(*We had to,—in the Play*)  
I knew her sweet eyes saw the sea,  
She could not but obey,  
Mine was she this night,—nor could he,  
Her husband, further sway  
The heart that, mine throughout the years,  
Filled mine this night with fire and tears.

XII.

And, when the Play was over, out  
    We sprang,—and all the night  
Around me seemed to laugh and shout  
    With mad divine delight,  
And the gold stars shone every doubt  
    And tremor out of sight :  
We swore that next night we would be  
By the old white-winged love-sweet sea.

XIII.

And next night not on any Stage  
    We stood,—but by the deep :  
And passion's billows ceased to rage,  
    And love's head fell asleep  
Upon her breast,—and age on age  
    Seemed past our bower to sweep  
Harmless and soundless, while we lay  
Rapt in wild joy till dawn of day.

*O SEA!*

I.

Here in the teeming city lo! I cry  
     Towards the wide waste of waters :—give to me  
 Harbour of wind and light whereto to fly,  
                                     O Sea !

II.

Give me thy boundless breadth of spirit, and place  
     Thy wreath of sunlit air and starlit glee  
 About my head,—and fold me in embrace,  
                                     O Sea !

III.

Let all men know that though the world's harps choose  
Full many flower-crowned loves, and bow the knee,  
I am *thy* singer,—whom thy breath renews,  
O Sea!

IV.

When the dim town in robes of fog and smoke  
Welters,—let all my soul burst forth and flee :  
Let it be just as if thy clear voice spoke,  
O Sea!

V.

My love was sea-like,—and through all my days  
Sea-like my voice shall in its measure be :  
Thine own white Goddess wove my brow's first bays,  
O Sea!

## VI.

Deathless thou art ! Oh, let my soul partake

Thine awful strength that hilt nor blossomed lea  
Wots of,—me thine eternal singer make,

O Sea !

## VII.

Here in our England I am far apart

From minds of men who know not aught of thee ;  
I am repaid if but I win *thy* heart,

O Sea !

## VIII.

Oh, what are flowers or ferns or green-clothed hills

Or ~~ornate~~ <sup>ornate</sup> valleys haunted by the bee  
To thy storm-voice that every sea-bird thrills,

O Sea !

IX.

Thou art eternal as the human race ;—

Thou wast before man trode the earth, or he  
Gazed at the fervour of a woman's face,

O Sea !

X.

Thou sawest pale Cleopatra's galleys ride

Upon the blood-splashed deep ;—beheld'st when we,  
Conquerors, saw Nelson kiss death's lips for bride,

O Sea !

XI.

At Marathon thou watched'st the fierce hosts

Collide in battle :—far from rose or tree,  
Thy mouth the great gold Sun's direct kiss boasts,

O Sea !



## XII.

Hear us ! Oh pour upon us thy great might,  
And clothe us round with thine eternity,  
And set upon our brows thy deathless light,  
O Sea !

*A POET'S DEATH AND BURIAL-PLACE.*


Oh, bring no wine nor sacramental bread  
But place upon my grave one rose of red,  
And let one tuft of cream-white meadow-sweet  
Mix with a soft fern-cluster at my feet,  
And place one lock of woman's sacred hair  
Upon my dead heart—for I found her fair !—  
And let one great sea-poppy from the waste  
Of sand and shingle on the grave be placed :  
Then let there evermore around me be  
God's silence, and my bride's breath—even the sea.

*Sept. 27, 1881.*

*L'ENVOI.**"SONG-SPRAY."*

*Not of flowers in the heart of the mountains  
Nor of silvery voice of the fountains  
Nor of leaves of the summer or spring  
Nor of moss nor of ferns do I sing  
In this, the new song that I bring.*

*Though the blossom of passion be there  
And the passionless bloom of despair,  
Yet, chief of all blossoms for me,  
And fairer than blossom of tree,  
Is the bloom of the foam of the sea.*



*"Song-Bloom" was of love and of hours  
That dreamed 'mid the bosoms of flowers :  
But the spray of the sea is in this  
And the voice of the wind, and its kiss,  
And the storm's ineffaceable bliss.*

*And the colours of waves and of skies  
And of clouds as they darken and rise ;  
And, mighty as ever for me,  
The mingling in measureless glee  
Of moon and of stars and of sea.*

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